

STATE OF ILLINOIS
96th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

86th Legislative Day

1/13/2010

Speaker Mautino: "...having arrived, the House will be in order. We shall be led in prayer today by Lee Crawford, the pastor of the Cathedral Praise Christian Center in Springfield. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off their cell phones and pagers, and rise for the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance."

Pastor Crawford: "Let us pray. Gracious God, who have blessed us beyond measure, we pray this day for this great assembly, for this august Body. May Your strength and Your wisdom be upon each of them. I pray that they lean not toward their own understanding, but rather, Dear God, that they acknowledge You that You may direct their paths. So, this day as we place our complete trust and our confidence in You, we ask that You would grant us Your wisdom, that You would grant us Your knowledge, Your grace, and Your guidance. In all that we do this day we pray and ask in Your Son's name, Amen."

Speaker Mautino: "We'll be led in the Pledge by the Gentleman from Peoria, Representative Leitch."

Leitch - et al: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Speaker Mautino: "Roll Call for Attendance. Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I have no excused absences among House Democrats to report today."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Bost."

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Bost: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let the record reflect all Republicans are present today."

Speaker Mautino: "Mr. Clerk, take the record. 116 Members answering the call, a quorum is present and the House is in order. Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "Introduction of Resolutions. House Resolution 816, offered by Representative Reitz. House Resolution 819, offered by Representative Acevedo. And House Resolution 823, offered by Representative Feigenholtz. And House Resolution 825, offered by Representative Sacia. These Resolutions are referred to the Rules Committee."

Speaker Mautino: "Mr. Clerk, on page 4 of the Calendar appears House Resolution 809. Excuse me, appears Senate Joint Resolution 74. Representative Flider."

Flider: "Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. Senate Joint Resolution 74 is an agreed Resolution which creates the manufactured home study committee. And this committee will look at the process and procedure by which a mobile and manufactured home in a mobile home park would be relocated. And the report would be due in March of this year. I'd ask for your support."

Speaker Mautino: "This requires a Roll Call vote. Are there any questions? Seeing none, the question is, 'Shall Senate Joint Resolution be adopted?' All in favor vote 'yes'; opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, take the record. 109 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 1 voting 'present', Senate Joint Resolution 74 is declared adopted. On page 3 of the Calendar, under Order

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of Resolution, appears House Resolution 655. Mr. Clerk, place that on the board. Representative Joyce."

Joyce: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. House Resolution 655 would encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to find an alternative place to place dredging other than the Lucas-Berg Pit in the Village of Worth in my district. This is a very natural... It's developed into a very natural area with water, with beautiful forestry, plenty of wildlife and fish. And the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has identified this along with 19 other sites outside of the State of Illinois to have up to 17,250 cubic yards of dredging materials that have... previous studies have indicated to contain many contaminants and the people of that community do not want that material disposed of in their backyard. So, I'd ask for your favorable approval of this Resolution. And I'd be happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman has moved adoption of House Resolution 655. No one seeking recognition, the question is, 'Shall this Resolution be adopted?' All in favor say 'yes'; opposed 'no'. The 'yesses' have it, in the opinion of the Chair. And the Resolution is adopted. Mr. Clerk, on page 3 of the Calendar, under the Order of Concurrence, appears House Bill 2688. The Gentleman from Peoria, Representative Leitch. Read the Bill."

Leitch: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. This Bill is a Bill that comes from Senator Clayborne in the House and I know Tom Holbrook is very interested in it. It permits a... an experimental

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gasification project... pilot project in southern Illinois.
And I'd ask for its approval."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman moves concurrence of House Bill 2688. No Members seeking recognition. The question is, 'Shall the House concur?' All in favor vote 'yes'; opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Mr. Clerk, take the record. On a vote of 113 voting 'yes', 2 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present', the House does concur with Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 2688. The Gentleman from Cook, Representative Burns is seeking recognition."

Burns: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As many in this chamber may be aware, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti in the last 24 hours. Thousands of people are dead, many more are injured, homeless, hungry, and in that grief-stricken country, it's just another tragedy. And many of us in the Black Caucus, we met yesterday and we discussed the earthquake and we plan on aiding relief efforts, but I think it's very important that right now that all of us take a moment of silence to sympathize with the Haitian people in this most difficult and troubling time. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman has requested a moment of silence. All Members rise. Representative Burns."

Burns: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Mautino: "On page 4 of the Calendar, under the Order of Resolutions, appears House Resolution 809, Representative Acevedo. The Gentleman from Cook."

Acevedo: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. House Resolution 809 urges all relevant U.S.

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military officials to reconsider the charges brought against the three Navy Seals. Many Americans, both military and civilian, believe these charges are the result of an overly sensitive reaction by military officials to allegations of a detainee abuse. There has been a great outpouring of support for these three Navy Seals including the campaign by several Members of the U.S. Congress to drop these charges. I'd be happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman moves adoption of House Resolution 809. No one seeking recognition. All in favor say 'aye'; opposed 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. And House Resolution 809 is adopted. The Gentleman from Champaign, Representative Rose, is seeking recognition."

Rose: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to have with me Mr. Garrett Anderson. Garrett will be my intern for the new semester here. He's an ISU student. He's from Champaign, but significantly, Garrett Anderson is an Iraq War veteran and you might not be able to see it from here but on his shoulder is the Purple Heart lapel pin. So, could we please give him a big thank you for everything he's done for us in Illinois and for our country."

Speaker Mautino: "Welcome to the House of Representatives, welcome to Springfield and welcome home. Go Redbirds. Mr. Clerk, Agreed Resolutions."

Clerk Bolin: "Agreed Resolutions. House Resolution 817, offered by Representative Fortner. House Resolution 818, offered by Representative Madigan. House Resolution 820, offered by Representative Durkin. House Resolution 821, offered by Representative Durkin. House Resolution 822,

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offered by Representative Berrios. House Resolution 824,
offered by Representative Sacia."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Currie moves to adopt the
Agreed Resolutions. All in favor say 'yes'; opposed 'no'.
The 'yesses' have it. Agreed Resolutions are adopted. Mr.
Clerk."

Clerk Bolin: "House Joint Resolution 82, offered by
Representative Currie.

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-SIXTH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE
CONCURRING HEREIN, that when the two Houses adjourn on
Wednesday, January 13, 2010, the House of Representatives
stands adjourned until Friday, January 15, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Thursday, January 21, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Monday, January 25, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Friday, January 29, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Monday, February 1, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 03, 2010, at
12:00 noon, or until the call of the Speaker; and the
Senate stands adjourned until Thursday, January 21, 2010,
in perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day,
it stands adjourned until Thursday, January 28, 2010, in
perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it
stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 03, 2010, in

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perfunctory session; and when it adjourns on that day, it stands adjourned until Monday, February 08, 2010, at 5:00 p.m., or until the call of the President."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Currie moves adoption of the Adjournment Resolution. All in favor say 'yes'; opposed 'no'. The 'yesses' have it. The Resolution is adopted. The Gentleman from Cook, Representative Acevedo, is seeking recognition."

Acevedo: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of personal privilege."

Speaker Mautino: "State your point."

Acevedo: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, sometimes we don't realize these individuals work very hard in protecting these chambers and these are the doormen. Today, we have working here for the last day, Mr. Dan Horn, who's up in the gallery right there. He's moving on to Homeland Security and today's his last day. We just want to say thank you for your services, Dan."

Speaker Mautino: "Mr. Clerk, on page 3 of the Calendar, under Agreed Resolutions, appears House Resolution 802. Representative Howard."

Howard: "Thank you, Speaker. My colleagues..."

Speaker Mautino: "Members, if you'll give the Lady your attention, she has a Death Resolution for a member of the U.S. Army. So, please rise and give your attention to the Lady on House Resolution 802."

Howard: "Thank you. Even though he was a resident of my district, living in the historic Pullman area, I was unfamiliar with Albert Dono Ware, who was often

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affectionately called AD by his family and friends. It was only after his death that I became knowledgeable of the life of a young man who always sought to overcome obstacles in order to achieve success. Early on when his family immigrated to the United States from Monrovia, Liberia, Albert's first obstacle was to learn the language of his country so that he could fully benefit from his Chicago Public School education. At Corliss High School, he excelled in math and science and was enrolled in honor classes. He also excelled in athletics being a part of wrestling, football, swimming, track, and tennis teams. Following high school, he worked with the disabled and in summer youth programs. He attended Kennedy King College and Chicago State University. He majored in computer science, like his father. He aspired to be a U.S. Army Ranger and having been greatly influenced by the attack of September 11 on the United States, he joined the National Guard. He continued his service to his country by enlisting in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Afghanistan where he was supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. As a motor transport operator, he was dedicated to working extra hours to make certain his fellow soldiers had everything they needed for their mission. Sergeant Albert Dono Ware died while in his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. He leaves a wonderful and loving family including a younger sister, who performed a praise dance at the funeral service. She did that for her brother who had always encouraged her to pursue a desire to become a professional dancer. Evidenced by the hundreds of persons attending his

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funeral service and the many who spoke, including Governor Quinn and the Liberian Consul, Sergeant Ware was well-loved and considered a role model. I was pleased to see the many military personnel in attendance from all branches of the service paying tribute to someone who left us much too soon, but did so while making the ultimate sacrifice for his country. I would ask that all of my colleagues join me in sponsoring this Resolution."

Speaker Mautino: "The Lady asks leave that all Members of the House be added as Sponsors of the Resolution. Leave is granted. The Lady now moves adoption of House Resolution 802. All in favor say 'yes'; opposed say 'no'. The 'yeses' have it. And the Resolution is adopted. Thank you, Representative Howard. Mr. Clerk, on page 3 of the Calendar, under the Order of Concurrence, appears House Bill 1188. Representative Davis. Mr. Clerk, read the Bill."

Davis, M.: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On House Bill 1188... We're concurring on Senate Amendment 1188. Senate Amendments 1, Senate Amendment 2, and Senate Amendment 3, we concur. I move to concur on this Bill. And with those Amendments added, we move to concur."

Speaker Mautino: "The Lady has moved concurrence of Senate Amendments 1, 2, and 3 to House Bill 1188. Are there any seeking recognition? The Gentleman from Vermilion, Representative Black, is seeking recognition."

Black: "Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. An inquiry of the Chair?"

Speaker Mautino: "State your inquiry."

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Black: "My analysis indicates that Senate Amendment #2 becomes the Bill. Is my analysis just a little out of date or..."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Davis."

Davis, M.: "Senate Amendment 2 is the majority of the Bill and we're seeking concurrence on all Amendments."

Black: " All right. I... I think I have the answer, but it appears to me that Senate Amendment #1 is simply a shell... s,h,e,l,l Amendment and probably should not have appeared on the Bill when they sent it over. That just the way they did it?"

Speaker Mautino: "But that's the way they sent this over..."

Black: "All right. Okay. All right. Thank you."

Speaker Mautino: "...so we must concur in 1, 2, and 3."

Black: "Thank you very much. Will the Spons... Representative, let me just ask you a couple of questions and I... I know that many people have worked very hard on this. I do have a piece of correspondence from a funeral director in Chicago. He says, as an African-American funeral home that has served the Chicagoland African-American community for many years, I strongly urge that you oppose a cemetery oversight Act now contained in 1188. Some of the concerns he raises and perhaps you can address them, he feels that there are some serious flaws in the Bill. For nu... number one, imposing traffic control responsibilities on funeral homes and cemeteries, which he feels is beyond their legitimate control. Are his comments simply not in order or does he have something to be concerned about? As I recall, when we debated this in the past, they have to furnish traffic control. I just recently attended a

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military funeral in my district for a young man who was killed in Afghanistan. The procession was two and a half miles long. So, I think this gentleman is saying there's no way that he has the ability to impose traffic control responsibilities on a procession that might be longer than what some of us are used to."

Davis, M.: "Representative, in response to your first comment in reference to customer service agents who work for the funeral parlors, they will have to have licenses. We feel that those are the people who are front-line in preparing for the remains of our loved ones and they certainly have earned the honor of being prepared to meet those needs. As far as the traffic goes, the traffic section has been terribly scaled back. The fines have been reduced, and really, it's not the responsibility of the funeral director or the cemetery, they will not be held responsible for that. The situation that you mentioned of course is very valid and surely one would know if you're providing a cemetery funeral, a police officer's funeral, a fireman's funeral, then there will be large automobiles traveling through that section. And I think the Bill scaled down any responsibility for those funeral directors or cemeteries."

Black: "Okay. Do you know whether this gentleman has talked to you, Representative? Let me..."

Davis, M.: "What's his name?"

Black: "Let me give you his name. It is Charles Childs, Jr., who owns and runs A.A. Rayner and Sons Funeral Home in Chicago on 71st Street."

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Davis, M.: "Yeah. I know Mr. Rayner very well and I have not received any letter from him."

Black: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "I have not received any telephone call from him."

Black: "Okay. I'll..."

Davis, M.: "I'm... I'm... What's the date of your letter? What's the date?"

Black: "January 7."

Davis, M.: "Perhaps that was before some of the issues were ironed out."

Black: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "I have not... I have not heard from Mr. Rayner."

Black: "I will have staff make a copy and give it to you before we leave in case you want to..."

Davis, M.: "I would be very grateful for that, Representative."

Black: "Okay. I... I see my staff person has already given you a copy. Okay. Let... let me ask if you can... I don't know the answer to this. I have had, again, correspondence and communication with cemetery and funeral home owners about insurance and bonding requirements that they will have to have. Some of them are maintaining that this kind of insurance, that we're asking them by this law to do, is not available currently in the insurance market. Is that an accurate statement or..."

Davis, M.: "In the Bill, Representative, there are options. They can receive a letter of credit or they can be self-insured."

Black: "All right. So... so, the surety bond was in the original Bill..."

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Davis, M.: "That is correct. It is not in this version."

Black: "And we've taken the surety bond out."

Davis, M.: "That is correct, Representative."

Black: "Okay. Just a couple of additional questions and I do appreciate your time. If I own a cemetery and... let me just tell you. My grandparents and my mother are buried in a cemetery in Danville that's exceptionally and exceedingly well run. And I visit my mother's grave probably six or seven times a year and my grandparents' grave four or five times a year and they do a wonderful job. And I understand that in Chicago that wasn't the case and there are some serious problems that need to be addressed. But if I go visit... my mother died in June and I... on that date, I always go to the cemetery and if there's someone mowing the grass, I really don't pay much attention to that person. And I think the owner of the cemetery wants to know, why does the person mowing the grass, who may only be employed for three short months, why does that person have to be registered under this law?"

Davis, M.: "They don't have to be registered under the law."

Black: "Well, what is this..."

Davis, M.: "They can... they... they merely fill out a registration... I mean, a form and it doesn't cost them anything and they don't have to do that. They fill out the form and it stays with the department. The owners send it to the department, but you know, it's not any hardship..."

Black: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "...on that person cutting..."

Black: "Again, I think I was looking at the original Bill."

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Davis, M.: "Yeah. We... we changed that."

Black: "Just so that... just so... what you want is so that records are available..."

Davis, M.: "That is correct."

Black: "...of who the employees were at the cemetery. Now, how do you get into the constructive notice where some cemeteries literally stack... You know, you may think that only your mother or only your grandparents are buried there, but over a period of time, somebody else may be buried on top of that vault or one of your parents may have been moved and somebody else put in their vault. How does this Bill address what happened up in Chicago?"

Davis, M.: "When a purchase... when a purchase is made for a grave, they have to be told and it has to be in writing if this is a multiple..."

Black: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "...burial spot or if it's a single burial spot or maybe a secondary, but they are notified upon the purchase of that grave."

Black: "So, that... there is constructive notice to the consumer."

Davis, M.: "That is correct."

Black: "Okay. The only other thing that I need you to comment on and again, I'm not sure that I understand this. If I want to volunteer at the cemetery where my mother and my grandparents are buried, maybe to tend a flower garden that's right on the corner near my mother's grave, is there anything I have to do to just... other than ask the owner, you know, I'd like to come out and weed the flower bed, if

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it's okay with you, maybe plant some of my mother's favorite flowers there. Am I subject to anything, if I want to volunteer?"

Davis, M.: "If you... No. If you're coming to visit, you certainly don't have to do anything, but if you're volunteering, you certainly have to comply with all the rules and regulations of that particular cemetery."

Black: "Okay. But... and again, forgive me, for... I'm trying to keep up and staff just told me that... that volunteer.. uncompensated volunteer has been taken out of the Bill. So, all you'd really have to do is to get permission. That you don't have to go through any..."

Davis, M.: "Uncompensated volunteers do not have to fill out anything as far as the state is concerned."

Black: "Okay. All right. Now, my last question, Representative, and again, I thank you for your indulgence. The... the Illinois Cemetery Association is still opposed to the Bill. Have they... have they told you what specific objections they have?"

Davis, M.: "The... the specific objection that I realized was it's an unregulated industry and they chose not to be regulated. Now, they do not represent all of the cemeteries in the State of Illinois. I believe we have over 2 thousand. Approximate... I'm sorry, approximately 14 thousand cemeteries and that association represents... they don't represent a very large number of that group."

Black: "All right. But of the 14 thousand cemeteries, this Bill is only going to impact a very small percentage, correct?"

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Davis, M.: "Some of the 14 thousand are inactive and it certainly wouldn't affect them."

Black: "So... But township cemeteries, municipal cemeteries, religious denominational cemeteries, they've all been exempted from the Bill, correct?"

Davis, M.: "Partially... they're partially exempt and they have to be held to the following requirements: they are held to a possible investigation, mediation, and citation by the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulations. They have to maintain reasonable maintenance standards. The obligation to maintain a map or a plot they have to continue with. They have to have burial record requirements. There's whistleblower protection for their employees. The obligation to make the entire... Oh, I'm sorry... entries into the cemetery oversight database; they have to do that. They have to comply with the Consumer Bill of Rights. They have a prohibition against cash only payments. They're required to provide a written contract. They're required to provide contract information on the written contract. They're obli... they have an obligation to use reasonable best efforts in any procession in entering the cemetery. They're required to post signs with the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulations Consumer Protection Hotline. And they're obligated to have an index that corresponds with the map or plat."

Black: "All right."

Davis, M.: "As you know, Representative Black, many of these things are already a part of what they do."

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Black: "Right. Representative, I really appreciate your answering the questions and I know that you and others have done a great deal of work on this Bill. Mr. Speaker, to the Bill. I... I certainly appreciate the fact that many have worked long... long hours to address a most egregious situation that occurred in Chicago at Burr Oak. However, that situation has not occurred in my district and I don't think it ever will. It is, as I've said many times on this floor, what we tend to do in this Body is to react to someone who wouldn't have followed this or any other law or rule. They were beyond those rules and regulations. Evidently, they didn't care. The almighty dollar ruled... overruled any of their common sense of decency. But we all have to not only represent part of the state, we have to represent our district. And the people in my district, who run excellent cemeteries, have simply said that this will greatly add to their costs that they will have to pass on to the consumer and that they don't feel that it is necessary in their operation. No question that Burr Oak should have been subjected to serious penalties and I sometimes wonder if there weren't sufficient laws on the books to have prevented what happened at Burr Oak. But doing the best I can to represent the constituents in the 104th Legislative District, I will be voting 'no'."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Cook, Representative Miller. You have five minutes."

Miller: "Thank... Only five. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Mautino: "She indicates she will."

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Miller: "Representative Davis, can you just sort of identify what the difference are... differences are between the Bill that was passed earlier and what the Senate has concurred with? I think that's where we need to begin."

Davis, M.: "Well, as a... for a brief synopsis. As you know, we had hearings across the state in reference to the issue, Representative. And as we worked through the difficulties, there was an attempt to solve the problem or problems, and yet maintain what we already do. So, I would say the key differences are the following: we partially exempt cemeteries that are religious, municipal or inactive. However, they are still required in many instances to follow State Law. The cemetery workers will not be required to register. The previous Bill asked them to register and pay a two or three dollar fee, but this way they register and they don't have to pay anything on this Bill. They just register with their information so that Illinois Department of Finance and Financial... So, they have that."

Miller: "So, there's... so there's a track record of who they are and some sense of... All right."

Davis, M.: "That's correct. Absolutely. Without imposing any cost on these workers. The Cemetery Relief Fund is created for the purpose of cleaning up the abandoned and neglected cemeteries. In the State of Illinois we learned, with our hearings, that there's some cemeteries that are lying dormant who are creating, let's say, unsafe conditions for those who live in those communities, not Chicago, but some areas."

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Miller: "Are there any additional requirements that you know of and for those cemeteries who..."

Davis, M.: "I'm sorry. I didn't hear you."

Miller: "Are there any other additional requirements for those cemeteries to tap into that Cemetery Relief Fund?"

Davis, M.: "No."

Miller: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "No, no. Abandoned and neglected cemeteries will be the beneficiary of those funds."

Miller: "Any other differences?"

Davis, M.: "Well, there are a few more. It provides that all fees and rules needed to implement the Bill will be reasonable. It adds additional members to the cemetery oversight board. And it gives cemeteries... It adds one more person. It gives cemeteries 10 days rather than 3 days to enter their information. So, you know, I can provide you with a copy of these 8 changes."

Miller: "Yeah. I just wanted to be clear on what those differences were and how they helped create some of the problems... solve some of the problems. Part of... with the Burr Oak Cemetery issue was the sense of ownership. Was there any actions taken within this legislation in dealing with getting down to the owner or transferring the ownership of cemeteries and who would be ultimately held liable?"

Davis, M.: "It requires owners to be licensed, which was not required by the state prior to this legislation."

Miller: "Okay. Regard..."

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Davis, M.: "And if a person sells his or her cemetery, the new owners will also have to be licensed. And we thought that would assist us in having some recognition of those who are owners who live out of state."

Miller: "Now, I agree with the recommendations. So, it couldn't be an unlicensed cemetery owner purchasing a cemetery, both would have to be licensed under state regulations and laws."

Davis, M.: "They would have to be registered or licensed in the State of Illinois."

Miller: "In the State of Illinois, not in any... They could be in other states, but they'd definitely have to be licensed here."

Davis, M.: "Well, we would have no control over what they owned or registered for in another state, but if they're doing business and they get a license to do business in the State of Illinois, then they would be required to be licensed to own a cemetery."

Miller: "Okay. Last question or two questions. One is in regards... regards to training of cemetery workers and staff. It is... the law indicates that... that they have to be licensed. That's a good thing. Is there any requirements or..."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Cook, we'll grant you one additional minute to close."

Miller: "Will any of the rules process for any training or continued education, as it would be under my license, for cemetery workers?"

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Davis, M.: "The managers and the higher level workers do have to take some classes. The lower level workers do not..."

Miller: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "...unless their cemetery owner requires it, but the state will not, only if you're a manager or a higher level employee."

Miller: "And do you know if that's going through the rules process or through JCAR?"

Davis, M.: "No, that's the law."

Miller: "Okay."

Davis, M.: "It'll be the law."

Miller: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Representative."

Davis, M.: "Thank you, Sir."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Cook, Representative Riley, is seeking recognition."

Riley: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Mautino: "Yes."

Riley: "Thank you. Representative, first of all, I'm going to support this piece of legislation. There was a tremendous problem that was highlighted and I think that a lot of people, many of us got involved in it, and I think it culminated in this piece of legislation. Maybe it's not everything people wanted it to see, but I think all in all it's a very good piece of legislation. I do have a few questions. On the analysis, there was a gentleman, Mr. Willie Carter, who's from Restville Cemetery on 117th and Central and he's listed as a... an opponent, but right before you started presenting this Bill, I spoke to him on the phone. And evidently, he testified before the Senate

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yesterday and for the most part he really doesn't have a problem with the Bill as it exists right now. He just had a few concerns that he hopes are addressed at some point. And so, I wanted to let you know that. He just generally had a problem; he thought that, there was a size issue, that smaller cemeteries were sort of overburdened by the legislation. So, can you just address that, Representative?"

Davis, M.: "Well, first, let me say that I know Mr. Carter. My parents and my grandparents are buried at Restville Cemetery. And it is a small cemetery, but he was a member of the committee as well. He sat on the committee and I believe that his concern may have been that those lower level workers would have had to pay a fee. Well, that is no longer in this Bill."

Riley: "Mmm mmm."

Davis, M.: "There's no fee. They merely send their information or their employer sends their information into... to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations. I don't know what else his concern could have been because I thought we had addressed the concerns of most of the cemetery owners."

Riley: "I can't... I can't hear, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Mautino: "The order... will the chambers be in order. Bring the noise level down, please."

Riley: "I'm sorry, Representative."

Davis, M.: "I was going to say, he was concerned about the traffic fine and the... first of all, all he has to do is use reasonable diligence in making sure the traffic flows. And

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also, the fine, it used to be 10 thousand, now it's only 500. But I think Mr. Carter doesn't have to be concerned because where his... where his cemetery is situated it's a right-hand turn and you're right there and there's nowhere to go but inside of that cemetery. So, he really... I don't see him having a problem with that, but I'm sure he would be glad to know that that fine had been totally reduced and that all the owner had to do was use reasonable diligence in making sure that traffic moved smoothly."

Riley: "Well, just so you know. Those were things that I did tell him in our telephone conversation, and again, he was not averse to the Bill as it exists right now. So we did speak about those issues and he thought that a lot of good work had been done. So, thank you very much."

Davis, M.: "Thank you... thank you, Representative. And tell Mr. Carter he can still call me."

Riley: "I'm sorry."

Davis, M.: "Tell him he can still phone Monique Davis."

Riley: "Thank you."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Moffitt."

Moffitt: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Mautino: "Indicates she will."

Moffitt: "Representative Davis, I want to first commend you and everyone that's worked on this on certainly trying to come up with a satisfactory plan. I still have some concerns, but I know you have made a genuine attempt and put in a lot of hours. The first question is regarding opponents. I know the Illinois Funeral Home and Cemetery Association is

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still opposed. Is that correct? That's the information I have."

Davis, M.: "Okay. There were two known opponents after the Amendments had been added. One was Mr. Willie Carter and the other one was the Illinois Cemetery Association... and Funeral Home Association which really represents a really small group."

Moffitt: "It's my understanding they are still officially opposed. Are there any other opponents?"

Davis, M.: "No, just those two, Representative Moffitt."

Moffitt: "Those are the only two."

Davis, M.: "Those are the only two."

Moffitt: "Okay. But they're still has opponents. It does make reference to licensures. Are there new licensures requirements... licensing requirements in this Bill?"

Davis, M.: "For customer service, people at the front desk who provide customer service, they do have to have a license."

Moffitt: "And that's... that's a new license."

Davis, M.: "Owners, managers, and customer service people."

Moffitt: "Okay. So, it's a new license and it's... so, they'll be a new fee with that license, right?"

Davis, M.: "Well, when you say a new fee, do you mean the old Bill or this Bill?"

Moffitt: "Are we... are we establishing a new fee with this Bill?"

Davis, M.: "Well, this Bill, Sir, does require a reasonable fee for the license."

Moffitt: "Okay. So, there will be a new fee established and you're..."

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Davis, M.: "A very... it'll be a very small fee, yes."

Moffitt: "Reasonable. Would you define reasonable? Can you give me a range for what..."

Davis, M.: "For me..."

Moffitt: " ...reasonable would be?"

Davis, M.: "Well, for me, reasonable may not be what's reasonable to you, Representative."

Moffitt: "I think it's the other way around, Representative."

Davis, M.: "It'll be established by rules."

Moffitt: "But it has not been set yet, so we're... the passage of this Bill would be approving a fee that has not been set. We don't know what it would be."

Davis, M.: "Well, any regulatory Act and all of our professional licenses in the state require a fee. Cosmetologists have to pay a fee. Dentists, barbers, these are professional people performing a very serious act, and just think about it now, this is a serious act. When you have a loved one who passes away, you really want to feel that that person, your beloved person, is in the hands of a professional. So, do they have to go to college and get a doctorate? No, they don't. Do they have to have an associate's? No, they don't. But they do have to have some training and knowledge in the field in which they operate. I don't think that's too much to ask."

Moffitt: "Representative, will they... when independent contractors come in to do work, will each independent contractor have to get a license then to perform work?"

Davis, M.: "If you're an independent contractor and you're acting as a manager or a customer service representative,

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you would have to follow the state rules. Yes, Sir, you would."

Moffitt: "So, they would need a license. A few years ago when I represented Warren County, there was a cemetery near Monmouth that had... really, I guess you would say it was lacking proper maintenance and upkeep, and then Comptroller Lolita Didrickson came to Warren County, had one of her attorneys with her, filed lawsuits under current law and was able to get that cemetery cleaned up, taken care of, proper maintenance. My point is this, laws were broken then, Comptroller Didrickson came in and it was corrected. Laws were broken at Burr Oak. Would you not agree?"

Davis, M.: "They absolutely were broken."

Moffitt: "So, if the current laws had been enforced, we would not... and I don't mean to be pointing a finger at anybody... but if current laws had been enforced, I don't think we would have got to the point we did with that cemetery. Would that be correct?"

Davis, M.: "Well, when we have regulation, Representative Moffitt, it helps to bring oversight. Now, perhaps in your community, they knew who to call. I think in this particular community, and the community that I represent, they really didn't know who to call. They were calling the sheriff. They were calling police officials. They called the mayor of one of the small towns. And you know, I applaud Lolita for going out there and also for letting people know that she was the... what would you call it... she was the person to oversee what happens and to resolve that problem. You know, I served here with Lolita Didrickson

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for a number of years and I'm very proud of her record. I think she did exactly what she was supposed to have done, but her people that she represented also knew that she was the one responsible."

Moffitt: "Representative, I thank you for your responses. My concern is that... and again, I commend you for your efforts..."

Davis, M.: "Thank you."

Moffitt: "I think we're both wanting to accomplish the same thing, but to create more fees, more bureaucracy and to approve legislation when we don't even know how much the fee would be is a real concern. But I thank you for your responses."

Davis, M.: "Thank you."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Cook, Representative Dunkin."

Dunkin: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill. Ladies and Gentlemen, this legislation is long overdue and it's been... there's been a lot of hours, a lot of... a lot of folks spent a lot of time on this piece of legislation. Talking to a whole number of individuals across this state, a lot of testimony that was heard, a lot of high and strong emotions went into crafting, first of all, clarity and understanding of the cemetery process and how it is that we ended up where we were back in July, but most importantly coming up with solutions. This chamber came up with a task force, the Governor came up with a task force, the Speaker was proactive, the Governor was proactive, Representative Monique Davis was proactive, Senator Emil Jones III as well

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as Dan Brady and myself were active and seeing to it that we simply get our hands around this problem. And this Bill is very straightforward. It simply speaks to the creation of a Cemetery Oversight Act, a place that is very, very sacred to many of us for generations on. And so this piece of legislation does all of us here a huge favor. He takes... we take a major step towards improving an area that we all believed and want to see taken care of with no anticipated problems. Certainly not with the disinterment of well over 400 bodies scattered or stacked on an acre, 400 bodies or bones just stacked up on top of one another because of the negligence in part of us not regulating an industry that needed regulation. And so, this Bill does some things that we should have done a long time ago. It's very unfortunate that many of us here, even in this chamber, were impacted and directly affected by the lack of oversight. And so, this Bill simply takes it out of the Comptroller's Office and puts it into an agency that does this anyway. It creates employees, managers, owners, customer service reps to be licensed. It creates mediation from family members who are completely befuddled as of what happened with their loved ones. It creates special funds to provide some type of reburial relief for families. It creates cemete... a cemetery database, whistleblower protection. It repeals unnecessary eminent domain powers, and it actually exempts certain cities, certain cemeteries that simply are no longer functioning. This was a work that went into the hearts and minds of a lot of people who had an indirect... an indirect interest in seeing to it that we do the right

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thing. So, I'd like to commend our Leadership here in this chamber, over in the Senate and the professionals from funeral directors and cemeteries. I'd like to say thank you, Representative Monique Davis, for carrying such legislation and helping to allay some of the emotional concerns in dealing with a lot of the intense debate that still goes on in the hearts and minds of a lot of citizens, especially in Chicago. The history of Burr Oak was that of America. Blacks couldn't be buried next to whites and so a Burr Oaks was created almost 90-plus years or so ago. Burr Oaks also only accepted cash, no credit card, no checks, cash. So, this Bill attempts to do the right thing based off of hours and hours of testimony and the Leadership with Members here in this chamber, across the hall, and the Governor's Office. And I want to commend all of my colleagues who participated in those hearings, those long, emotional hearings. Thank you. I will be voting for this Bill to come into effect. And for those who may have reluctance on this particular legislation, there's always chance for us to come back with an Amendment."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Brady."

Brady: "Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, to the Bill. Good."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman, I'm sorry, I thought your remarks were closed. You may have one minute to finish your remarks and then we've got to get on to the State of the State."

Dunkin: "Thank... thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to commend the Sponsor, all of the Leaders, all of the long, long and arduous hours of testimony that people came to give voice

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to. This is the type of collaborative government or working government as colleagues that we should be doing. And I'm looking for any improvement, as are many other families, if there are further improvements to be added as an Amendment to this piece of legislation. I think this is the best step at this time in moving forward and doing the right thing, the right thing for citizens here in this state. I would encourage all of my colleagues to vote 'aye'. Thank you."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Brady."

Brady: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill. First off, I, too, want to thank Representative Davis for taking this Bill and sponsoring this Bill. We have worked on this Bill, Representative Dunkin and many others. First off, I'd like to address a feeling from some of my colleagues that this Bill is somehow a knee-jerk reaction to Burr Oak Cemetery and those horrific events that occurred there. Some of you may or may not know, I've been working on changes in the industry, funeral and cemetery industry, long before Burr Oak occurred. Unfortunately, Burr Oak forced people to pay attention. I don't think this legislation's a knee-jerk reaction when I served as well as a number of my colleagues on the Governor's task force and we created a report and spent our entire summer working through and listening to those in the industry as well. Does the report make everybody happy? No. But it's far from any type of a knee-jerk reaction. You know, we make a lot of changes around here, often in the way of legislation for a variety of reasons, whether it's technology or other

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issues. I mean, look at the Illinois Cemetery Care Act which was approved in July of 1947. A lot of things have changed and practices have changed, and this Bill makes some needed changes. It's not perfect, but it makes some needed changes. Being it puts the division of the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation to enforce the rules for at need and takes a big part of this out of the Comptroller's division. You know, maybe it's my over 30 years in the death industry, as a funeral director, a licensed funeral director, embalmer, former coroner, and my experience firsthand problems between families of... yes, some cemeteries as well as some funeral homes. But some you around here, and I hope you listen for just a minute, have bought into the propaganda around this place by certain entities that the sky's falling because of this Bill. We're impeding upon this Bill."

Speaker Mautino: "Would the Ladies... Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, would you please give the Gentleman your attention, bring the noise levels down. Thank you."

Brady: "One of... one of my particular favorite and fliers going around, happens to be a flier that indicates this would subject cemetery volunteers to potentially huge financial, criminal penalties when they're exempt from the Bill. That's not the kind of individual I hope is sitting around the kitchen table explaining to grandma and grandpa their options when it comes to burial arrangements. I'd like to suggest to you that you further review this Bill. I've heard, you know, that you shouldn't be penalized for what occurred at Burr Oak. Cemeteries across the state are not

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being penalized for what happened at Burr Oak. Cemeteries across this state that are larger cemeteries that have a greater impact in interaction with consumers across this state are going to have some changes. The Bill goes to deal with some of those changes through a rulemaking process, where there'll be input for that particular... input from that industry. One of the concessions made is that an advisory board to the department made up of individual professionals, industry professionals, and yes, those for-profit cemeteries would have representation as well. When you look at complaints that have been filed over the years of registered cemetery authorities, there's some 525 complaints of cemetery registered authorities of people that take trust out... money over the state. And I'm sure many of you have your own stories regarding cemeteries, but when it's your own parents or your grandparents or other family member and a problem occurs, you may want a better system in place to right the wrong and know who's responsible for misleading or deceiving or committing a criminal act against someone of their family. This Bill provides some needed changes and enhances protection to the consumer without painting every cemetery in the State of Illinois with the same brush. Ladies and Gentlemen, there's more work to do, but this is a good start. It is protection, an enhanced protection that is needed in the industry and I certainly ask for an 'aye' vote as I intend to support the Bill and I will continue to work, as the task force that I've served on has, in this industry and will continue to work and be involved in the rulemaking

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process as many of you I have talked to about where we go from here and what this Bill truly means and doesn't mean. Don't buy into a lot of the propaganda, Ladies and Gentlemen, that's floated around by a certain entity. Of course, they're going to come around very slowly to change, but change that I feel is needed. Thank you, again, to those who have worked on the Bill, Secretary, to Kathy Bruns from our staff, to Adam from the Democratic staff and all those and my Representative colleagues, thank you and I ask for a 'yes' vote."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Morgan, Representative Watson."

Watson: "Mr. Speaker, I move the previous question."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman has moved the previous question. And Monique... Representative Davis to close."

Davis, M.: "Thank... thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just urge an 'aye' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Mautino: "The Lady has moved concurrence on House Bill 1188 with Senate Amendments 1, 2, and 3. All in favor vote 'yes'; opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, take the record. 85 voting 'yes', 30 voting 'no', 2 voting 'present'. House Bill 1188 has received the Constitutional Majority and is declared passed. Representative Chapa LaVia."

Chapa LaVia: "Yes. Thank you, Speaker and Members of the House. Some of the most valuable people we meet here during our tenure are our door guys. And I'd like to bring to the attention of the Members that we lost one of our

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door guys of 21 years over the weekend on January the 9th, Moe Faulkner. He worked for us for 21 years. He was an amazing member of this General Assembly, just like each one of us and I'd like us to take a moment to remember him in silence. He was also a World War II Navy veteran and served onboard of DE USS Coffman. He received a star for the American Theater and we owe him and his family at least this moment of silence. So, I ask that we have a moment of silence for Jerome L., 'Moe' as we knew him, Faulkner."

Speaker Mautino: "All Members will rise for a moment of silence."

Chapa LaVia: "Thank you, Speaker and Members of the House. God, rest his soul."

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

Clerk Mahoney: "Agreed Resolutions. House Resolution 826, offered by Representative Winters. House Resolution 827, offered by Representative Tryon. And House Resolution 828, offered by Representative Tryon. And House Resolution 829, offered by Representative Coladipietro."

Speaker Mautino: "Representative Currie moves adoption of the Agreement Resolutions. All in favor say 'yes'; opposed 'no'. The 'yeses' have it. And the Agreed Resolutions are adopted. The Gentleman from Vermilion, Representative Black is seeking recognition."

Black: "Mr. Speaker, do you have time for a point of personal privilege?"

Speaker Mautino: "Absolutely, Sir."

Black: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. My remarks are not timely and I

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apologize for that, but yesterday in debate a friend of mine and a colleague on the other side of the aisle, while waxing eloquently about borrowing money, said a phrase that just literally is like fingernails on a blackboard to me. I hope some of you feel the same way. And I won't embarrass him by calling him by name, but he said, this is an opportunity to get free federal money, free federal money. I'll keep that in mind when I fill out my income tax and I hope he does as well. That's one of the problems around here and one of the problems in our country is we tend to think that federal money is free and state money is free, too. In this budget year, we're going to find out that neither source of funds, be they from state taxes or federal taxes, is in fact free."

Speaker Mautino: "Thank you, Sir. The Gentleman from McHenry, Representative Franks, is seeking recognition."

Franks: "Thank you. I appreciate the prior speaker's comments. I think they were directed at me and I guess I should probably explain the economic aspect and maybe Mr. Black would understand how this... What we're doing is we're getting a much larger return on bills that we have to pay so people can actually get treatment in the State of Illinois. And by paying our bills, the Federal Government will reimburse us 150 million on the 250 million dollars we pay. Then once we get that reimbursement of 150 million we can pay more bills with it and then we get reimbursed again at 60 percent. So, then we get 80 million. Then if we use that 80 million, and then they reimburse us again, we get another 50 million and if we use that 50 million, and they

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reimburse us again, we get 30 million and it keeps going and going and going. So, this is hundreds of millions of dollars of benefit and it's a way to leverage federal money that's out there and if we didn't leverage that money, what we would be doing is telling our citizens that we've left hundreds of millions of dollars on the table for partisan political purposes and we also decided not to pay our providers, so we're going to make sure people who need assistance, those people who need it the most, will not have access to health care. If that's the position the Republican Party would like to stake out, I wish you much luck."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Bond, Representative Stephens, is seeking recognition."

Stephens: "Well, the Gentleman from Vermilion doesn't need my help, but you know if you... I don't know why the Gentleman from Lake (sic-McHenry) brought up the subject of partisanship. I don't get it. What's partisan in America? You're in control of the United States Senate. You're in control of the United States Congress. You're in control of the... you're in control of the White House. You're in control of every statewide office in Illinois. You're in control of the House of Representatives and the State Senate. I don't understand why you think it's partisan. You know, if you believe that Democrats can manage government, then you believe that Mark McGwire never hit a homerun because of steroids."

Speaker Mautino: "The Gentleman from Vermilion, Representative Black."

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Black: "Yes. Mr. Speaker, let the record reflect that I didn't mention anybody's name. Perhaps the Gentleman from McHenry had a guilty conscience or something. I... I couldn't remember who said it. I just remember hearing it. But I would like to agree with my good friend and colleague, Representative Stephens, nothing in that remark was intended to be partisan. There were no votes on both sides of the aisle on additional borrowing. There's nothing partisan, just an honest disagreement, and I was shocked that the Gentleman thought I might have been talking about him."

Speaker Mautino: "I was just happy it wasn't me. Thank you, Sir. Your points are well-taken. Have a good day as we prepare for the State of the State."

Speaker Madigan: "Speaker... Speaker Madigan in the Chair. The regular Session will stand in recess. The Doorkeeper is now... he's recognized for announcement."

Doorkeeper: Mr. Speaker, the Honorable President Cullerton and the Members of the Senate are at the door and seek admission to the chamber."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Doorkeeper, please admit the Honorable Senators. As designated in House Joint Resolution #81, the hour of 12 noon having arrived, the Joint Session of the 96th General Assembly will now come to order. Will the Members of the House and our esteemed guests from the Senate please take their seats. Mr. Clerk, is a quorum of the House present?"

Clerk Mahoney: "A quorum of the House is present."

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Speaker Madigan: "Mr. President, is a quorum of the Senate present in this chamber?"

President Cullerton: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quorum of the Senate is present."

Speaker Madigan: "There being a quorum of the House and a quorum of the Senate in attendance, this Joint Session is convened. We'd like to welcome several esteemed guests to today's ceremony. First, there's the Attorney General of the State of Illinois, Lisa Madigan; the Secretary of State, Jesse White; the Comptroller, Dan Hynes; the Treasurer, Alexi Giannoulias; the Auditor General, Bill Holland; Superintendent of Education, Christopher Koch; and the Supreme Court Justice, Anne Burke. The Chair recognizes the House Majority Leader, Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I move for the adoption of Joint Session Resolution #2."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Clerk, read Joint Session Resolution #2."

Clerk Mahoney: "Joint Session Resolution #2."

RESOLVED, That a committee of ten be appointed, five from the House, by the Speaker of the House, and five from the Senate, by the President of the Senate, to wait upon his Excellency Governor Pat Quinn and invite him to address the Joint Assembly."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie has moved for the adoption of the Resolution. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye'; all those opposed say 'no'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. The Resolution is adopted. Pursuant to the Resolution, the following are

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appointed as a committee to escort the Governor. The appointments from the House will be: Representative Careen Gordon, Representative Don Moffitt, Representative Sandra Pihos, Representative Carol Sente, Representative Andre Thapedi."

President Cullerton: "The Senate Members are: Senator Larry Bomke, Senator Gary Dahl, Senator Susan Garrett, Senator Emil Jones, III, and Senator Martin Sandoval."

Speaker Madigan: "Will the Committee of Escort please convene at the rear of the chamber and await his Excellency, the Governor. Mr. Doorkeeper, has the Governor arrived?"

Doorkeeper: "Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Governor of the State of Illinois, Patrick J. Quinn and his party wish to be admitted to this chamber."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Doorkeeper, admit the Honorable Governor. Mr. Governor, welcome."

Governor Quinn: "Thank you. Well, thank you very much. Before I begin I think it's important for all of us in the Land of Lincoln, our state, almost 13 million people live here and some of whom are Haitian Americans and we know today a very devastating natural disaster has hit the country of Haiti, the people of Haiti. And I think the people of Illinois have generous hearts and we say prayers for those victims of the natural disaster and we ask God to help them recover as quickly as possible. And I know the people of Illinois are good and true and whatever we can do to help the people of Haiti, we will do. And I really want to thank everyone here for the warm welcome. I appreciate the opportunity to be the Governor of the State of Illinois, the Land of

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Lincoln, it's a great honor. I know it's a trust. I believe the office of Governor is one that belongs to the people and serving in this office for nearly a year, it's been a great honor and privilege, an opportunity to visit people all across our State of Illinois. It's a great state, a diverse state and I believe everybody's in and nobody's left out. We all know that I assumed this office under the most difficult of circumstances. The Constitution of our state was followed by our Legislature, by you, the elected Representatives of the people and on the 29 of January, last year, I took the oath of office. In taking that oath of office, I knew that we had a state in crisis, a state that needed stabilization, that needed an honest Governor and an honest government. And I think in the past year we've worked together, night and day in some cases, to win the trust of the people. We have to build the trust of the people. Obviously, the events that preceded my oath of office shook the confidence of the people of Illinois and their hearts were hurting. It was our duty as men and women of a democracy, the greatest democracy on planet earth, to come together in good faith and reform our government. And I said at the beginning of my time as Governor this has to be a year of reform. And I think in the course of carrying out our duties in the past year we've done very well with respect to restoring ethics and integrity to our government. We understood there was a need to pass strong, tough laws to deal with honesty and integrity, the integrity of our government must always match the honesty of our people. So, we went about the

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task. We reformed the public pensions; we dealt with boards and commissions. We enacted strong standards with respect to procurement in contracts. We reformed the behavior and enacted strong ethics standards for lobbyists, as well as state employees. All of those were very important reforms and needed reforms. In addition, we took on the very difficult task of looking how campaigns are conducted and how they're financed, never an easy subject in any place in this country or at the federal level. We came together in good faith. We worked together. We passed one law that was found wanting, so we didn't pass... I didn't sign that law and we came together again working together in a democracy and enacted a campaign finance reform law that I did sign that is, for the first time, a chance to have limits on campaign contributions in the State of Illinois and much more disclosure and openness with respect to money and politics. I think that's a great achievement. I think when the time is written and history is written, people will look back and say that the Members of the General Assembly together with the Governor in 2009 heard the people and enacted fundamental, ethical reforms. I spoke on the day that the campaign finance Bill passed the House and Senate with Sheila Simon who is a good friend, who is the daughter of Paul Simon, who endorsed me for Lieutenant Governor and I told Shelia that we didn't get the whole loaf in the campaign finance reform Bill, but she immediately said we got many slices. And I think that's really how her father would look at it and I think how democracy works. There may be more to do. I think

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there is. I think we do need in Illinois, what I would call an ethics initiative that we would put into our Constitution that would give voters at every level of government, whether it be the local level or county level or the state level, the power by petition and binding referendum to enact ethical standards and campaign finance rules that the people feel are appropriate for all of us who are elected representatives. I'd like to see that on the ballot in 2010 on November 2, when those of us who are running for statewide office go before the people. I think that it's important to give the people of Illinois the tools that they need to strengthen our democracy. We have to strengthen the voters. They're the ones who count. They're the ones who pay our salaries. They're the ones who pay the taxes. And I think having an ethics initiative, an initiative solely devoted to ethics in government and campaign finance reform, that is a very important need in our State of Illinois because democracy is a process that goes on year after year and it's very important that we bring the people in to our democracy and let them set the rules for our conduct and our behavior. I am very pleased and I want to commend all those in this Legislature that did enact a Constitutional Amendment Resolution that will be on the ballot this fall to establish a recall process in our state. This is the first time in the history of Illinois such a Constitutional Amendment has been presented to the people. It took three-fifths vote of each House of the General Assembly, both the House and Senate, and the people must enact the recall

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Amendment by three-fifths vote. And I think they will. I think the people of Illinois know that before I became Governor we had great difficulties with two Governors, one who is in jail and the other who is indicted and awaiting trial. And I think it's important always to give the people of Illinois the opportunity to cast their vote of confidence or no confidence in a Governor who may be betraying the public trust. So, I think enacting a recall Amendment and an ethics initiative into our Constitution this year will complete the job that the people of Illinois sent us to do. When things go wrong in a democracy, what you have to use is the tools of democracy to correct those mistakes. Now, I think in the course of working together this year we have shown that when people work together we can accomplish great things. We can accomplish amazing things. And I think one of the things that was bad in our state before my arrival is there was much dissension, discord, disharmony, friction, name-calling. It doesn't work in life; it doesn't work in a democracy. It's very important that we always have an attitude of civility in the course of our work, that we respect all of those who are elected by the people and that we try our very best to work together to accomplish great things. I think it's important to go over a few of the things that we've done this year that we have accomplished and I think it is something that's important for the people to know that their elected representatives worked together on issues of very high importance to the public. And one of those issues that occurred this year was the fact that when I

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became Governor we didn't have all of our state parks open or our historic sites and that the Governor's Mansion was rarely used. I think it was important for the people of Illinois to see that the peoples' house, the Governor's Mansion, was open to the people. And on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, his bicentennial, we had an open house at the Governor's Mansion. We've had many, many events. We've invited Legislators as well as ordinary everyday people in Illinois, the heart and soul of our state, to come to the Governor's Mansion and to come to our state parks. I think it's very, very important that in this time of economic recession we have parks available for the people and I made sure that that happened when I became Governor. We want to leave no child inside in Illinois. I believe that it's important for kids to get outside in nature with their moms and dads and with others, their friends, to see the wonders of nature. Long ago, a hundred years ago, when Teddy Roosevelt was President of our country, he said conservation is the patriotic thing to do and it's important that we understand the spiritual value of being in nature and so our state parks are quite important to us. And I was distressed that my predecessor padlocked some of the state parks and very early in my term as Governor I ordered that the parks be opened and they are and I'm glad to see that. That's just one... the beginning of openness in our government. We had to work together on all kinds of important tasks. One of which, a very important one, that's important for our economy, is that we had to get three-fifths vote of the Members of the General Assembly in

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the House and in the Senate, 60 percent of each House, to vote for what is called the capital Bill, or a job recovery Bill, whatever you want to call it, for 10 years in Illinois. For 10 years, we did not have legislation passed that invested in the fundamental things in our economy, like safe roads and safe bridges, like improving our water systems, like making sure we have good rail systems to get goods to market to build our schools and rebuild our schools. There was a lot of friction, we all know it, but finally, this past year, we came together, worked together and enacted a landmark law that will really help our state today and tomorrow with respect to its economy and jobs. We invested together and worked together on this. You know, I want to commend all of those who worked on that, the leadership of the Republican Party, the Democratic Party and membership of both Parties. We understood that the folks back home, the folks who elected us, they needed us to get this job done and we worked together to get it done. It wasn't easy; it took a lot of hard work, but that's what democracy is all about, banding together and working together. The same way when something goes wrong in our democracy, we don't overlook it. What happened at our University of Illinois, our great state university that we're all so proud of, they had an admissions review scandal... an admissions scandal that came up in the course of the year. I appointed an admissions review commission to look into it, to find out the facts. They found out the facts. I had to replace seven trustees on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. They elected a new

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chairman, Christopher Kennedy. A new president has taken office, Stan Ikenberry, who's doing an excellent job. And that's how you deal with things in a democracy. When something doesn't go according to what you want it to do, it isn't supposed to go that way, then you correct the mistake and President Ikenberry told me not long ago that the board at the University of Illinois today is the best one he's ever seen. And it's so important that we have good leadership at all of our educational institutions. So, that's what democracy is, people coming together when a problem arises, working together to solve it. Another one that we've worked on in the past year that I think should get some attention is the whole issue of foreclosure. Many of our neighbors, good people, through no fault of their own, have lost their job and they're in danger of losing their homes. We enacted a good Bill that gives more time for people to get their finances together to ward off foreclosure. Another landmark Bill that we passed was to help utility consumers, people who are struggling in a tough recession paying their utility bills. We have a law now in place that I signed that helps people of a very poor, modest income afford their utilities in cold winter as well as making sure that all of us have an opportunity to use our utility bill to help finance energy efficient improvements in our home. Yet another consumer Bill, a very important one that we enacted, was to deal with the issue of denial of care by insurance companies. Many health insurance consumers have found that when they need help the most the insurance company denies care when we

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should have a process where there's an independent review of that and that we were able to pass that law. It's a very important law. We worked together on that and it will make sure that we have good health in our society. And I think health is important. I think every life is important. There's a passage in Scripture that says, if you save one life, you save the whole world. And this year in Illinois, a historic year 2009, for the first time since 1921 we have less than one thousand deaths on the highways of Illinois, the lowest number since 1921. Now, that took a lot of work. The Members of the General Assembly passed legislation; it was signed into law. It took State Police men on the highways, men and women who work for our Department of Transportation, oftentimes in very difficult weather to clear the roads and make them safe. It took law enforcement at every level; it took a lot of hard work. But there was one person in particular, in my opinion, who's led the way for our great record at reducing fatalities, saving lives on our highways. He's a man, a modest man, who has always stood for public safety. He's my friend. The day I got sworn in, he called me up and said whatever it takes to help get our state back on track he was willing to help and serve. We passed a law this year, a very important law that will ban texting while driving. He was the leader of that, working with Representative John D'Amico and I want to publicly thank our Secretary of State Jesse White... please stand up, Jesse... I said Jesse White's a modest man. You know where, on the eve of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, he would be 81

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this coming year, and Dr. King, as you may know, his first pastorate was in Montgomery, Alabama, the home of Alabama State, that's where Jesse White was going to school at the very time that Dr. King arrived in Montgomery. And Jesse White, as a college student, joined with his friends and helped support Dr. King. They were there when Rosa Parks said she wasn't going to move to the back of the bus. Jesse White has had a life of service. This year is the 50th anniversary of the Jesse White Tumblers, half a century of helping mentor young people and making sure they go the right way in life. So, I'm publicly very grateful to you, Jesse. You've been a great friend, a great advisor. I really appreciate your help in these troubled times in helping me as Governor of Illinois and you're a great man. Thank you very much. As I mentioned, any time we can save a life it's a very important thing and I think one of my very first Bills that I signed this year had to do with mammograms and breast cancer screening. We don't want anyone to be denied health measures that they need in order to save their life and make their life better. And it takes sometimes in a democracy the efforts of lots of citizens at the grassroots level to bring to our attention the need for important reforms and that happened. On one of the first Bills I did sign was a Bill that allows women of color, women of low income access to mammograms and breast cancer screening. That effort was due to the tireless efforts of two women who are with us today and I think it's important to recognize their efforts. Dr. Janice Phillips is a doctor, a leader in the area of

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minority health and health care disparities. She's on the board of the Susan G. Komen cure for cancer and the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force and together with Angela Walker, who had dinner last night at the Governor's Mansion, she... Angela is a breast cancer survivor. She works for the American Cancer Society. She's focused on educating the public on the importance of mammograms and early detection. I'd like both Dr. Phillips and Angela to stand up and be recognized for their great effort. I think it's important to recognize citizens when they take their time, their effort, their ability to organize and bring together a whole community of people that get a law passed. Just imagine that, some group of people through their hard work have passed a law in our state, the Land of Lincoln, and I think it's very important to recognize that kind of effort in a democracy. Everybody in a democracy is important. It's not a spectator sport; it's something where all of us have a duty as citizens to participate. And I think related to that is another issue that I was very impressed with in the past year. We had a horrific scandal at a cemetery in our state, Burr Oak Cemetery, it was on the national and international news. It was a very, very horrific scandal and it's incumbent upon all of us here in Springfield, in our state capital, to address what went wrong there at Burr Oak and may go wrong at other cemeteries in our state. And I want to commend the General Assembly for taking this issue and squarely addressing it. It's very, very important that we pass reform legislation there. That's part of working

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together and I think that's the key for our state's success at all times, all of us working together for important causes. And also, another issue that came up that was a very difficult one in the past year and I think really needs attention because it's something that we did for our country. You know, there is a passage in the third verse of America the Beautiful that talks about what we have to do for our country. And it says, 'Oh, beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife, who more than self their country love and mercy more than life'. And I think it's important that all of us put our country above ourselves, from time to time, it's very important that we answer the call to duty. And I was contacted by our President Barack Obama and his administration about the need to come to Illinois, to our state, his home state, to inspect a prison, a nearly vacant prison that we haven't been able to afford to open, Thomson Prison, far away from here probably 150 miles, right on the border of Iowa. It wasn't easy. There were them... some that will even open the door for inspection criticized that decision, but as Governor you have to make decisions. You have to have fortitude. You have to do what you think is right and what I tried to do when the President called and his administration is allow those federal prison officials to come to Illinois to inspect the prison. When they came through here, they found that it was a ideal prison for a federal prison that they were anxious to buy, but in order to really make this go forward in our state I agreed that I would sell the prison to the Federal Government for a fair market value.

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But we have a process, a good process in Illinois where Legislators come together, of both Parties, to analyze a particular matter and last week that analysis was complete. I do want to thank the Members of that committee that looked at the issue. In particular, I want to salute Representative Jim Sacia was not a member of the committee, but when he heard about the opportunity to create jobs in western Illinois, stood forward and said that this was, upon his analysis, a good transaction for the people. I also want to salute Members of the other Party that I'm not a Member of but who voted in favor of the transaction: Senator Dave Syverson as well as Representative Rich Myers and all the Members who voted for that transaction. I think it will be one that will help our state, help our state in the sense that we will have more jobs in a federal prison or maybe more than three thousand new jobs, new income to a part of our state. And I think it's important to remember that Illinoisans, the people of our state, we are never, ever afraid of anything. We can handle any task. The decision of the committee last week to have the transaction go forward I think is a good decision. It will help our country. As General David Petraeus has told the President that the closing of Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba and moving those detainees elsewhere, incarcerating them elsewhere, is imperative for our national security. So, when the President of the United States and his military advisors call, this Governor is there to listen and to help in any way he can and I think the people of Illinois appreciate that kind of work. And on the matter... on the

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matter of jobs, I think that is the matter before us all. Last year, a year of reform, a year of stabilization, I think we were enabled to enact a far-reaching law that will help us get jobs back on track in Illinois. But I want to be a Governor, a Governor who understands the needs, the economic needs of everyday people in our state. I've always done that as the Treasurer, as Lieutenant Governor and now I'm the Governor. And I think that the number one issue in Illinois today is getting our economy back on track. And I think that Franklin... President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said a long time ago, during the Great Depression when my mother and father were young, that the best social policy ever devised, the best government program ever devised is a good job. And that's what we have to understand that our mission this year is to revive our economy and put people back to work. We can do it in the State of Illinois. I want to be the building Governor. I want to build more things across our state, more good things, than any other Governor in state history. We have the wherewithal to do it. We have the will to do it. We have the people to do it. We have the work ethic to do it. It's very important in Illinois that we have work. We have to replace in some of our neighborhoods in Illinois a culture of violence with a culture of work and we must have work available to those who are ready and willing to do the job. I've laid out a jobs and economic growth plan for our state and I want to go over a little bit of what we're going to be doing this year when we have more construction planned for Illinois, road construction, bridge repair,

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water investment, rail construction, helping build new schools and repair old schools. This is what we have to do. We have to prime the pump and get our economy back on track and we can do that through public works that put our people to work. I think it's very important to understand that we have an opportunity in Illinois to make investments that will not only help create jobs today, but will set the foundation for economic growth for our state for many years to come. I want to go over, today, a few of the ways we're going to do that. We want to be Illinois, an inland port for the whole nation. We're right in the middle of the country. Every railroad in the nation crisscrosses our state. We have great transportation; we want to make it better. We want to improve our roads and bridges. This past year we were able to pave and repair two thousand miles of roads. That's enough roads to go from Springfield to the Pacific Ocean and you ain't seen nothing yet. In the coming year, we're going to do even more. We repaired 93 bridges this past year; we want to do more in the coming year. It's very important to understand that we can be an inland port for the whole central part of our country, the heart of our nation, but we have to make sure we have good transportation. We have to unsnarl some of the freight bottlenecks in our rail. We have to have good passenger rail. It's been growing by leaps and bounds; we want to keep it going. We want to have a passenger train that goes from Chicago to Rockford and beyond. We want to have a passenger train that goes from Chicago to the Quad Cities and beyond. And we also want to have high-speed rail that

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connects Chicago to St. Louis. You know, fast trains are the wave of the future. Our President is committed to this. Our state, we've invested \$400 million. We look forward to getting a decision from Washington very soon on a high-speed rail network where our state is the center of the whole network for the Midwest. I've worked with other Governors across the Midwest, both Democrat and Republican, we understand that rail can create a lot of new jobs for our state and we're very committed to that. We're also committed to air transportation. We have to understand that there's an opportunity in Peotone to build a new airport that will serve passengers and freight and create new economic growth and jobs and I want to accelerate our investment in the third airport this year. When we talk about fast trains, I'd like to see a fast train that goes from Chicago through the south suburbs, past Peotone, through Kankakee all the way to our great state university at Urbana-Champaign. It's very important that we have super fast rail and even in our capital Bill, we have some resources available to begin planning it... a very fast train that would connect Chicago and Champaign. I think it's important to understand that as our region gets closer and closer together through transportation, we can grow our econom... economies correspondingly across the Midwest but particularly connecting to universities and airports and having the opportunity with rail and highway transportation to be in the center of distribution for the whole mid... middle part of our country. We want to use an inland port, that whole idea, to create new jobs, high wage jobs in

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Illinois. This isn't pie in the sky. We're already doing it and beginning it in Joliet where we are creating an intermodal that is going to create thousands of jobs for hardworking people. I also think it's important not to make little plans. We have to have big plans. We have to look forward. We cannot have a Governor who just sees a day or two ahead. We've got to have a plan for our economy for the next generation. And that's why I'm committed to making sure that we have in our state the kind of biotechnology that we're capable of. We have great pharmaceutical companies in Illinois. We have great research universities. We have great hospitals. This summer, in Chicago, will be the International BIO Convention. It's important that we welcome them with open arms because biotechnology in all of its forms is a great way to grow the Illinois economy. We also understand that the FutureGen, a project that is on the drawing boards and hopefully close to fruition located in Mattoon, Illinois, where we have clean coal. We do it in the right way. This is an opportunity for our state... and I want to personally thank Senator Durbin for his leadership in this issue. Hopefully, we can get that investment in downstate Illinois. I also think another area that we need to improve upon, and I want to commend the Legislature for your action yesterday. It's important that we understand that in the middle of the country where people want to come to see the great sights of Illinois not just in Chicago but here in Springfield and all over, we want to be a hospitable place, a place for tourism, a place for history-

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based tourism to learn about Lincoln, a place for nature-based tourism to see an eagle fly over the Illinois River, a place to come to a convention in Chicago. And it's very important that we make sure that our conventions are... facilities for conventions at McPier, McCormick Place are done in the right way. So, we have work to do there, we know that, but we began that work yesterday. Look forward to signing the Bill that has passed the General Assembly. We want to make sure that those 303 thousand jobs that we have in conventions and hospitality and tourism in Illinois multiple and grow. We have to understand that that's a good part for our state to grow its economy because of all the opportunities that exist there. A growing economy in a growing middle class that's the key to empowerment for the people of Illinois. We have to have a Governor who has a plan who sees the future and I see a great future in green collar jobs in Illinois. We have to understand that we have to have a green way of thinking and a green way of acting. Sustainability is the key to economic empowerment in our country. Those are jobs in energy efficiency and renewable energy and water conservation, they will not go away. By definition, they stay in our own backyard. We have to teach young people who may be in a violent neighborhood not to take up a gun and use it against a fellow human being, rather they should take up a caulking gun and learn how to weatherize buildings. That's what we have to do in Illinois. I want to thank the Black Caucus and all the Members of the General Assembly who led the way for a weatherization initiative in Illinois. We know we

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have cold weather whether it's in January, or February or other times of the year. We want to make sure that our homes and our businesses, our institutions are weatherized. We can save money for consumers at the same time we can teach green collar skills to young boys and girls who want a job, they want a chance, they want to be in the middle class. That's what our country is all... always based on, having people with opportunity to follow their dream and get a skill that can make a difference. I really feel that the green economy, the opportunity to have energy efficiency in all of its forms across our state is very, very important as we go into this year and that's why, in the Bill that you enacted and I signed, the capital Bill, we have substantial investment in energy efficiency. We don't want to build one building in Illinois, one public building, one school, one university building, one kind of building of any kind without making sure that it's energy efficient. That it's LEED certified. That it's sustainable. That engages in water conservation. We have the resources thanks to the good work of people here in this assembly working with the Governor. We have the resources to embark on this journey. When we build a new road, we want to lay fiber next to that road so that we can have high-speed Internet, not just in some areas of Illinois, but all across our state where nobody is left out, where we don't have a digital divide, because high-speed Internet, broadband deployment, is the key for all of us to have better education, better health care, better law enforcement, more jobs in the future and again, our capital

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Bill is investing in broadband deployment. I do want to say a word about our agriculture. In Illinois, we have great, great agriculture. I had the honor of working with men and women in agriculture when I was State Treasurer and also when I was Lieutenant Governor. There's only been one person in the whole history of Illinois who's been in this office of Governor who has been voted Mr. Soybean by the Illinois Soybean Association. You're looking at him. My nickname is Soy Boy and I understand that our whole green economy depends on... a lot on our agriculture because George Washington Carver, a long time ago when he worked for Henry Ford, got plastic out of soybeans. You can get fuel out of them, soy biodiesel. You can eat them and it's very, very important that we understand that our corn and our soybeans are very key parts of the Illinois economy. Forty percent of our economy comes from agriculture. We need to honor those who till our land, who plow our fields. They're very special people. They work very hard. They have a tremendous work ethic and I really honor all of those in Illinois agriculture. We have to work with them to grow our opportunities, to have opportunities to export our products, to take our bio products and convert them into plastics or other goods and services that make a difference around the world. The Shedd Aquarium is the largest aquarium in the world, most visited aquarium in the world. It's located in our state in Chicago. They have a soybean roof. They discovered not too long ago that you can take soybeans, convert them to a paint, a white paint. You can roll that paint on to an asphalt roof like the Shedd

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Aquarium, 75 years old has, and that white paint reflects the sun off the roof, keeps the fish cooler and the people cooler and it saves money on air conditioning and they use less electricity. That's how we can use Illinois's 40 acres of soybeans in a creative way with an Illinois business that creates this white paint, soybean paint, that then is put on our institutions and saves consumers money and makes us more sustainable. We have to see how these interconnections come together. That's what I believe a Governor does. He looks for ways to put people together to work together for the common good. Related to this, the whole area of windmills and wind turbines. I think that this is something that all of us will embrace as we go through this next few years. We've invested money in our capital Bill in this. We have investment also in opportunities for credit for those who develop wind power and make sure they have contracts and so on, but what's important about wind power is it's clean and it's from our own backyard and it's all American. I've been to Iraq; I've been to the combat zone. I've seen firsthand how heroic our soldiers are and I think it's our duty back home to try and be as energy independent as we can. We do not want to see our dollars indirectly go into the hands of petro dictators somewhere around the world who are financing terrorism. One way that we can fight back... one way we can fight back is to have more renewable power in our state from the wind, from solar, from biomass. We can do this. We have a law that this General Assembly passed, a good law, that says by 2025 25 percent of our power, our

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energy, will come from renewable sources. We can do this. We got to embark on it right now. We've got to build those wind turbines and do it in a proper way. And one thing about the sustainable economy or the green economy or investing in renewable energy is it brings in jobs that create prosperity. Siemens, which is an internationally known company, came to Elgin this year. They're building gears... gears for these giant wind turbines, manufacturing in our own backyard. So, we have to grab this opportunity and develop the green economy for jobs for the people of Illinois. I think there are many other ways to do this, but I think it is important as we take a look at our economy to understand that jobs follow brain power and we can never forget that. That it's very, very important for all of us in Illinois to invest in education, from beginning of life to the end of life. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis did a study not long ago and said the very best investment the government can make is in early childhood education. It pays dividends for generations. For the first time in our state's history, we included early childhood facilities... education facilities in our capital Bill. We're going to help build some of those buildings that those young boys and girls will learn in. A long time ago, Carl Sandburg, poet laureate of Illinois, said the birth of a baby is God's opinion that the world should go on and if God thinks the world should go on with that baby, we'd better take good care of that baby. That's the way I look at it and I think it's very important that learning begins at birth, birth to five is a very key time

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for all children in Illinois. And we have to, as adults and parents, be custodians of the future. When the history of our time is written, they're not going to ask us how big our bank account was or what kind of house you lived in or what kind of car you drove, they're going to ask what you did... what we did to help make better the lives of children. So, I think as we go about our work this year we should have this attitude that we are working for the future. We have to do hard things today in order to make our kids and their kids lives better. That's really bringing out the best in Illinois and that's why I believe so much not only in early childhood education, but our elementary and secondary education. We have to have high standards; we have to invest in education, but we must make sure that it's accountable education. I want to thank the General Assembly this year for passing a very good Bill. It took a lot of hard work. I want to commend Senator Kimberly Lightford in particular for all the work she put in to expand public charter schools in Illinois. While we were able to sign that law and I think it's going to make a difference for children who want that particular education across our state. And just yesterday, the work of the General Assembly in very quick time working with a lot of different people and I want to salute Roger Eddy... Representative Eddy, Representative Jerry Mitchell, who worked so hard on getting a law passed that can make a difference for years to come called Race to the Top, accountable education. We have to comply with a federal deadline of next week to get our application in for maybe

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up to a half a billion dollars in federal money for Race to the Top to make sure that our education in our state at the elementary and secondary level is second to none. It's so gratifying to see so many school districts, I think it's up to 340 school districts, have already signed on to participate in this program. We've got to understand that education at all levels is the key to economic empowerment. It's the best way for equal opportunity for the most people in a democracy and that's why I believe in community colleges. We have our community colleges in Illinois bursting at the seams. Almost all of them have at least 10 percent enrollment increases, 'cause community colleges are key to having a nimble economy to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented to us across the world. We have to have community colleges that give people the skills they need to compete in a world economy and when something bad happens when you lose your job, what our citizens in Illinois do is they don't quit, they're not gloom and doom people, they go back to school, they improve their skills. And I know this firsthand because I used to teach community college at night and I saw how hard our men and women in Illinois want to improve their lives and continue their skills. So, it's important that we invest in community college. It's very important that we invest in our four-year universities and I think one of the great things that we did this year, working together, was to make sure that the MAP program, the scholarship program, a program that's been around for a half a century, to provide scholarships this year for 138 thousand students, 56

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thousand of them go to community college, the rest go to public and private four-year universities. That program was in danger; we know that, but we came together. We didn't throw up our hands; we didn't wring our hands. We said we can get this job done and we passed the law to make sure that the MAP program was protected. And I was so inspired when I was here that day, I believe in October, when all those students and their parents and their teachers came to our Capitol in Springfield, that was the loudest I've ever heard this building resound with the calls of students to make sure that the MAP program was protected. They were well-behaved, but they do believe in the power of democracy and the power of their own voice and so I want to salute all of those MAP students across Illinois, those scholarship students, many of them the first in their family who've ever gone to college. We have one of them today, Carey Ash is with us. He's a student member of the faculty Senate over at Champaign in the university there. He helped organize the student movement to save the MAP program and why don't you stand up and be recognized here, Carey. We want to make sure that we have as many scholarships as possible for our students. I look forward to working with you as we go through this year and having dedicated funding for our scholarship program in Illinois. I don't think it should be ever put in jeopardy. We need to make sure it has dedicated funding and that's a job for all of us to work on. Now, I said before that jobs follow brain power. We have some of the best universities on planet Earth right here in Illinois and we are very

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proud of our universities. We, the people of Illinois, invest in those universities. Our sons and daughters go to those schools and we want to make sure that those who graduate from our universities hopefully stay in Illinois and it's important that we understand that we in our educational system are preparing those who are going to create the new businesses of the future, invent the new products, work in very complex jobs that require great skill. So, education has to be part of our economic agenda to protect and grow the middle class in Illinois. We've got to understand that education and jobs go together. Now, I do want to also recognize today two young men who went to school in Illinois. This General Assembly has provided for an Illinois Math and Science Academy that's world-renowned. The students who have graduated from there have certainly made their mark on our economy and on our world. And also, these two young men went to the University of Illinois where we have, at the university, being constructed right now, the world's fastest computer. It's called the Blue Water (sic-Waters) Project. It's a very important project that will help our economy. It's going to help education in Illinois. The fastest computer on planet earth, the most powerful super computer; we're very proud of that. We have to make sure when we make that investment that we get the fruits of that investment. But these two young men that I want to recognize now are graduates of our high schools in Illinois as well as our university. One is Mike McCool, who graduated in 1991 from the Math and Science Academy. He was on a team at the

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign that created Mosaic, the Internet browser that was used to start Netscape. His colleague is Ramez Naam who helped develop two of the most widely used pieces of software in the whole world, the Microsoft Internet Explorer and the Microsoft Outlook and since 2002, he's served as a member of the advisory board of the NanoBusiness Alliance, a member of the World Future Society. He holds a degree in computer science from our University of Illinois. We've got to develop brains like Mike McCool and Ramez Naam over and over again in order to have a strong economy in Illinois and that means investing in our education. I'd like Mike and Ramez to stand up and be recognized for their contributions. Okay. Well, we all know that education is important, but we have to pay for it and I think that's the part of the address here today where the Governor who comes by constitutional mandate in January of the year to report to the people and to the General Assembly. We have to make sure that everyone is listening to the truth because our state, as you know, has a severe budget deficit. I didn't create it. When I assumed office it was eleven and a half billion dollars. We've done everything we can this year to try and manage this financial crisis. It's the worst financial calamity that Illinois's ever had and we've been a state since 1818. We've done all things imaginable. We've cut costs across the board in Illinois, our expenses. We're going to reduce our budget... our general revenue budget by about \$2 billion. That was a mandate of the people in the General Assembly and we've listened to that

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mandate. I've cut my pay. I take furloughs like all my other workers. It's very important that we understand in tough times those in government have to tighten their belt and we have. We've also used the resources of the Federal Government that have been made available to us through President Obama's leadership. Our state and many other states... every other state have received help from the Federal Government during this very difficult recession. We will continue to do that. I want to thank the General Assembly yesterday for understanding that having \$250 million and an opportunity to borrow that money that we can spend on our health care, our Medicaid, can bring back from the Federal Government an enhanced Medicaid match under the federal stimulus. We tried to do this in December, we were blocked, but I'm thankful to the General Assembly that you saw the wisdom of doing this and yesterday passed a law that I will sign that will get us more federal money under this enhanced match for our health care, because part of managing our budget right now is getting as many federal resources as we can. I'm going to be at the Governor's Association Meeting next month in Washington where the Governors across our country will come together and work with the President in the federal Congress to help our states navigate through this perilous economic time. My mom and dad, as I said, grew up in the Great Depression. We don't have a Great Depression, but we do have a great recession and it's caused great, great difficulties for the people of Illinois. Our income tax and our sales tax revenues have declined precipitously during this recession

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and we have to revive them; that's what our economic plan is all about. That's why everyone here worked so hard to get a job recovery plan passed last year that we implemented.. began to implement this past year and this year we're going to really get it going to get people back to work and hopefully, have more confidence and buy goods and services that they need for their family. But it is important to know that when we have a situation where we're getting federal resources, we're cutting costs, we're using strategic borrowing where necessary. This has happened in the past, sometimes it has to happen again in order to get our state through a tough time. As you know, there was a effort last summer by some to cut human services in Illinois during this great recession, cut them in half, cut them in half. Now, I didn't think that was right and I vetoed that budget and we went back to work and we passed a different budget, one that does involve some borrowing in order to keep our human services going. What are these human services? They're things like child care to make sure that working parents have a good place for their children to go to during the day and to learn. We have to invest in child care in Illinois. I was not going to cut child care in half. Same way with our community care which is a great program that provides a person of modest wages to help our seniors stay in their home so they don't have to go to a nursing home. They can be in their own neighborhood, participate in their neighborhood activities, go to their local church, go to things in their community that they've been used to for years and years. Our program

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of community care is an outstanding one and we weren't going to cut that in half. Same way with our persons with disabilities, they're special people in Illinois. And there was an effort to cut programs for them, slash them in half. I would not stand for it. We want to make sure that those who have disabilities have independent living and an opportunity to fulfill their dreams and so we rejected the, I think, unwise effort to cut the budget for those with disabilities. It's very important, I think, in Illinois even in the tough time that we always retain our heart, our decency. We have to have a government that understands that when some people get a bad break in life, lose their job, it isn't their fault and they don't despair. They don't think about committing suicide or engage in bad behavior, whether it be alcoholism or violence. We've got to help those people and rescue those people. So, that's the part of the Governor's mission I think to make sure we have a fair and decent budget. So, we had to work on that overtime last year. It didn't end on May 31, as you know, we went through June and then half of July and finally we came to a budget that's far from perfect, but it is a budget that we have to work on in the course of this fiscal year and in the next fiscal year as we prepare for the future. Now, I do believe we need more revenue. I think that after cutting all the costs, after using strategic borrowing, after getting as much money as we can get from the Federal Government, we're still short. We have to understand that in a democracy in tough times it takes fortitude to look at what the facts are, not to kid

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ourselves, there are some who have budget plans right now that sound good if you say them fast, but when you take a look at the fine print, they're there cutting human services, cutting education, cutting health care for people who have no other health care but what we can provide through Medicaid. It's very important we not do that. I think we must be a decent state and indeed, the key to the economy in Illinois is for us to keep our human services, our education and our health care topnotch and so, that's what I'm committed to do as Governor. Now, I think what we ought to do this year and I look forward to working with you on it, is to reform our tax system. We have an unfair tax system. We've had it for way too many years in Illinois. It relies way too much on property taxes and other levies that aren't based on ability to pay. I think there's a principle as old as the Bible that taxes should be based on ability to pay. Nobody likes paying taxes, nobody, but in a democracy that's what all of us as citizens do. We understand that self-government means that we have to come together and find a way to finance our government, we the people. And so, I look forward to working with Members of the General Assembly this year on finding a fair way to raise revenue from a fair Tax Code that, in my opinion, if we work together in good faith, we can cut taxes on five million people, maybe more, in Illinois. We can find ways using the personal exemption, using the earned income tax credit, using the property tax relief credit to cut taxes on people who need help the most, people of modest income and poor people. That's

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something wrong in Illinois where our state is taxing poor people into further poverty. I think we, as a state and as a General Assembly and as a Governor, can come together, work together, just as we did with the capital Bill and the job recovery Bill. We can do this this year, not next year, this year to make sure we have adequate revenue for important things that all of us want in government, but also do it in a fair way that doesn't unfairly tax anyone. So, I look forward to doing that with you. I think it's important that we embark on this journey and I want to assure you in the course of this year that we will continue to cut costs in government. There's only been one Governor in the history of Illinois who has a Super 8 card and I've used it as Governor; I'm going to continue to use it where appropriate. I think it's important to show economy everywhere you can and I have a VIP card at that particular dwelling place or lodging place. Now, in reducing our costs obviously, we have to be careful and I want to focus on something that is a very important area of our government, the Department of Corrections has a budget of over a billion dollars. It's one of the largest departments in Illinois and it's important that it be managed properly. Now, in cutting expenses, it's important that we understand that this has to be done in a focused way. I appointed a director of Corrections, a man who I have high regard for, he made a mistake. He told me that in carrying out his cost reduction plans that if there was going to be any early release programs, 13 states across the country are engaged in these kinds of programs for low-

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level offenders who have not committed violent crimes. I said if that had to happen, given our dire economy in Illinois the fact that we don't have as much money in our budget as we'd like to have, you must carry out this program with care and it can only apply to low-level, nonviolent offenders. In carrying out that mission, mistakes were made by the director for which he takes responsibility and I take accountability. Like President Obama said last week, when you're a Chief Executive, the buck stops here. I understand that if a mistake is made in government it must be corrected and that's exactly what I did the moment I learned a mistake was made by the Department of Corrections. I suspended the program. I brought into our government a very wise man, Judge David Erickson, who had served as a prosecutor, as a criminal court judge, as an Appellate Court Judge. He now is a teacher at a law school. I asked Judge Erickson to take a look at this entire program in Illinois. Since 1978, Illinois has had a early release program. It's been authorized by the Legislature, signed by the Governor. It's been amended a number of times. It has a lot of complicating factors. The judge came back very quickly with a comprehensive report and I'm happy to say that I'm carrying out his recommendations in his report. One of the recommendations is to have a chief public safety officer at the Department of Corrections to look at all releases of all prisoners, whether they be early or not, to make sure that the law enforcement officials in our state have adequate notice with respect to anyone's release.

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Similarly, there was a unspoken policy or rule, whatever you want to call it, at the department regarding early release. The judge recommended that that be codified into law and that's exactly what I recommended to the Speaker of the House and the Representatives here yesterday and the Senators. I'm very happy that we were able to pass the beginning of our public safety reform initiative to put into law in Illinois clear rules for the director of Corrections who has broad authority with respect to running our prisons and having said that, we have to understand in Illinois in the last 30 years we've gone from 18 thousand inmates in the prison to 46 thousand, 46 thousand men and women are incarcerated in Illinois. Right now, in our state every year, 28 thousand inmates come into prison and 28 thousand go out. We have to deal with this issue in our state like other big states. We want to make sure our prisons incarcerate hardened criminals at all times, we have to do that. At the same time, our society has to ask itself, is the best way to punish a low-level, nonviolent offender, someone who's committed a crime and has to serve some kind of punishment... is it the best way to have them go to a state prison with its cost? I think that it's important in our state that we examine this issue. I appointed last week Judge Gino DiVito to look at a sentence advisory council. It's provided for by law that was passed by this General Assembly. We're going to take a look at this. We want to make sure our prisons are always incarcerating hardened criminals, at the same time, we want to take a look at how we deal with these low-level,

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nonviolent offenders who still must be punished. There may be other ways... there are other ways to do it and I think that's something we need to embark on this year. So, I look forward to working with you on that mission. I think it's a very important public safety mission. On the area of public safety, I think we would always be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the great, great work of our men and women in uniform from our State of Illinois and from every state. Our state, we're proud, proud of every single boy or girl graduating from high school who answers the call to duty and joins our military. We have a voluntary military in the United States of America and as Governor of Illinois, I'm Commander in Chief of our National Guard. And as you may know, our National Guard was deployed this year to Afghanistan, the largest deployment in... since World War II of the Illinois National Guard and it was a very perilous assignment. And I went to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to watch their training and saw how arduous it was. We took horrific losses in Afghanistan: 18 were killed in action, 39 critically wounded. These are the best of the best and I do want to acknowledge the leader of our National Guard in Afghanistan who is with us here today and he's a man I think very highly of. It's Brigadier General Steven Huber, Deputy Commander of the Illinois Army National Guard. He served in our state as the commander of the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix in the Illinois National Guard led task force comprised of thousands of troops including more than 3 thousand from the State of Illinois. So, General Huber, I met General Huber in Kabul,

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Afghanistan and I saw his leadership and I saw the men and women under his command and they're not all young. Some of them are almost as old as me, a lot of gray hair. They're part of civil affairs. They go to a very foreboding place at the gates of Hell, confronting Al Qaida and the Taliban in those mountains of Afghanistan and they never, ever complained. It was just inspiring to be there with them and General Huber, on behalf of a grateful state and a grateful nation, thank you very much for your great leadership. I think that we not only want to express our gratitude and it was so inspiring across Illinois, I went to many homecoming ceremonies in Urbana, in Freeport, in Kankakee, in Chicago to see our soldiers come marching home and to see them welcomed, welcomed by our citizenry, the men and women of our state who understand how important it is to protect our democracy. And I think related to that is that we always in our state have to have the very best programs for our veterans and I do think, as we go through this year, we want to re... always make sure the programs we have to help our veterans, our service members and their families, are always there for them. We have programs like our Warrior Assistance Program in Illinois. All of our National Guard members receive help from this. Posttraumatic stress disorder is a signature injury of this war, the two wars we're in. It's very important that any person from our state who serves in the military, when they come back home if they have need of any kind of counseling they get that and we do... will provide that. I made sure in our budget last year when there was an effort to cut this

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program that that would not be cut. It will never be cut because it's very important that we take good care of those who have borne the battle. The same way with veterans' care. We have a program in our state to provide health insurance for veterans who have no health insurance, who are not part of the VA system and we're going to retain that as well. I'm happy to say that this year, thanks to the good work of the General Assembly, we're going to build a new long-term veterans' home in the City of Chicago for our veterans. The first time in the City of Chicago there will be a long-term care facility for our veterans. It's very important. It's also important that we employ our veterans. It's a situation unfortunately where when our veterans come home, many of them having fought for us in Bagdad or Afghanistan, have to fight for a job back here at home. That's not acceptable and it's important that we use our program operation and employ our veterans to its maximum extent to make sure that our veterans get employed. I do want to salute Mike Yauger and the members of the Teamsters and all of those who are involved in Helmets to Hardhats, a great program that provides jobs for our veterans upon their return. Also, we have to understand in Illinois, we cannot forget our military families who when our soldiers are deployed from the Reserves and the National Guard, we have family members oftentimes living without great resource. Many of our sol... service members, when they enter the military from the Reserves and the National Guard, make a financial sacrifice. They make less in their military job than they were making in civilian

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life. These are our citizen-soldiers. They've been with us in our country since the beginning of our country. They were there at Concord and Lexington; they're the militia. They're the ones who are always there to stand up for our democracy. So, they entered the service; they're making a very modest wage, indeed, their family members oftentimes find it hard to pay the utility bills, to pay the gasoline bills, the health care bills and the roof has a hole in it, how do you pay for that? So, we have a program in Illinois, a good program, the first of its kind in the country and it's been imitated by many other states, but we have the best. It's called the Illinois Military Family Relief Trust Fund. It provides financial assistance to all of our Guard members and Reservists. It's helped thousands and thousands of families, nearly 20 thousand military families in Illinois with more than \$10 million. We want to meet... I want to thank the General Assembly for helping fund that program. I want to thank the people of Illinois for voluntarily contributing to that program through a check-off box on our income tax. It's very, very important that we not forget that. It's also important that we honor those families who have lost a son or daughter in these conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. They come from our state. Since I've been Governor, there have been 36 service members killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, 36 in just one year. There have been 270 since the war began there on September 11, 2001 and we have families in Illinois, Gold Star families, who will never see their son or daughter again, someone they've known from the day they

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were born, there are no words in the English language or any language to relieve the pain of losing such a special person. I went to two funerals over the weekend: one a funeral in Chicago and another one a wake in Troy, Illinois in southern Illinois. And a grandmother of Brad Smith, senior airman Brad Smith, cried on my shoulder. There are no ways you could console a grandmother who's lost somebody she was very devoted to. Just like on Saturday, a young man, Sergeant Albert Ware, who was born in Monrovia, Liberia in Africa, immigrated, immigrated to our country, he was an immigrant, came to Chicago, learned in Chicago, went to school in Chicago, voluntary... volunteered for our military. He was deployed to Afghanistan, not once but twice, lost his life. It's important that we not forget our Gold Star parents. We have one of them here today and I think it's important that we recognize this man and his wife and the stepmom because Christopher Alcozer, I was at his funeral a few years ago, there was a hate group from Kansas there. They tried to disrupt the funeral. They echoed very vile epithets and had vile signs. It was a very difficult day. But Jesse Alcozer and his wife, Judy, and Kathy Alcozer, the mother of Christopher Alcozer, who was killed defending our country is a real hero. He saved other peoples' lives. He was only 19. He played the viola and he was a wrestler. He combined a lot of skills in life. God didn't give him a long life, but he gave him a purposeful life. And I think it's important that all of us in the Land of Lincoln remember Abraham Lincoln's words at Gettysburg, 272 words. He said that it's important for all

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of us, the living, to honor those who give their last full measure of devotion to our democracy, to our government of the people, to our opportunity to be here, to have a democracy and make laws and make peoples' lives better. So, I'm very grateful to the Alcozer family. I'd like to have them stand up and be recognized for all they've done for our country. I just want to point out that Jesse Alcozer is a Vietnam veteran. We all know our country didn't do Vietnam veterans right when they came home and Jesse was listed once missing in action. He was wounded seven times during the Vietnam War, thought to be dead. Well, he's definitely not dead because he testified and helped us pass a law and not that long ago called Let Them Rest in Peace. We, in Illinois, believe in honoring all of those who have given their lives. We make sure that their funerals are reverent and dignified and any group that seeks to heckle or disrupt a funeral, whether it be military or civilian, has to stand aside. That's what the Members of the General Assembly did not that long ago. This law has worked very well to make sure that we have reverence and dignity at our military funerals. So, I thank you for that. And in closing, I think it's important to understand in our state that there are those amongst us who aren't celebrities, they'll never be on the front page of the paper, they'll never be on TV, they're just the heart and soul of Illinois. Their kids are the ones who answer the call to duty. They go forward in the face of danger to defend us. They work as a team without complaint. They don't whine. They aren't petty. And I

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think we can take great example from those men and women. My father served in the United States Navy 3 years, 1 month, 15 days. That was the only public service he was ever involved in. He wasn't in a private job the rest of his life. He lived to be 93. God blessed him with a long life, but he always felt that that time in the United States Navy was a special time. And I... I think about my father here today because when I got sworn in on this very place I talked about my father and I read something from his commendation by his commanding officer in the United States Navy. He said my father was earnest, and cooperative and honest and cheerful and he believed in teamwork and I kind of think that's what we've got to do in Illinois. We've got terrible challenges, the toughest we've probably ever had in our lifetime. Now, we can play politics; we can call each other names; we can kind of avoid the problems, but that's really not what our service members do when they get a responsibility and that's certainly wasn't what my father did in life. So, he taught me always to work hard, to treat other people with dignity, don't call people names, be honest, be trustworthy and that to me is what Illinois is all about. Our state, the Land of Lincoln, the people of our state, they're the best of the best. We're pride of our nation. We can accomplish great things if we work together. So, I look forward to doing that with you, everyone here, today, tomorrow and every day in the future and we'll make the will of the people the law of the land. Thank you very much."

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Speaker Madigan: "Will the Committee of Escort please come forward to escort the Governor from the chamber. The President of the Senate is recognized for a Motion."

President Cullerton: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Joint Session do now arise."

Speaker Madigan: "The President of the Senate has moved that the Joint Session do now arise. All those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. And the Joint Session will now arise. The regular Session will come to order. Representative Lang moves that the House stand adjourned until Wednesday, February 3, at 12 noon, providing perfunctory time for the Clerk. You've all heard the Gentleman's Motion. Those in favor say 'aye'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. The House does stand adjourned until Wednesday, February 3, at 12 noon, providing perfunctory time for the Clerk."