

STATE OF ILLINOIS
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Speaker Hernandez, B.: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led in... in prayer today by Wayne Padget, the Assistant Doorkeeper. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cell phones, and rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance."

Assistant Doorkeeper Padget: "Let us pray. Dear heavenly Father, we give you all that we are on this day. Please brush away our weariness so that we may be inspired in our work. Help us to discover new ways to reveal your love to all that we meet. Keep our minds clear and focused on all that we need to achieve. And, Lord, give us the wisdom to overcome difficulties and find solutions. I look to you and trust you are with us this day. These things we pray, Amen."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "We will be led in Pledge of Allegiance today by Representative Gonzalez."

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

Gabel: "Speaker, let the record show that Representatives Costa Howard, Guerrero-Cuellar, Johnson, Moylan, Vella, and Yednock are excused today."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Keicher is recognized to report any excused absences on the Republican side of the aisle."

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Keicher: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Please let the record reflect that Representative Randy Frese and Ozinga are excused for today."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Have all recorded themselves who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 109 Members answering the roll call, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative Scherer, Chairperson from the Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter Schools reports the following committee action taken on March 6, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 5057, House Bill 5393, and House Bill 5632. Representative Evans, Chairperson from the Committee on Labor & Commerce reports the following committee action taken on March 6, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4819 and House Bill 4914. Representative Walker, Chairperson from the Committee on State Government Administration reports the following committee action taken on March 6, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 3288, House Bill 4348, House Bill 4488, House Bill 4838, House Bill 5005, House Bill 5100, House Bill 5301. Representative Stuart, Chairperson from the Committee on Higher Education reports the following committee action taken on March 6, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4073, House Bill 4415, House Bill 4643, House Bill 4733, and House Bill 5655. Representative Stava-Murray, Chairperson from the Committee on Public Health reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4476, House Bill 4907, House Bill 5043, House Bill 5529. The

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Chairperson from the Committee on Police & Fire reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 5008; and recommends be adopted is House Resolution 561. Representative Cassidy, Chairperson from the Committee on Restorative Justice reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 5131 and House Bill 5396. Representative Burke, Chairperson from the Committee on Revenue & Finance reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4125. Representative Kifowit, Chairperson from the Committee on Personnel & Pensions reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4321 and House Bill 5104. Representative Tarver, Chairperson with the Committee on Counties & Townships reports the following committee action taken on March 7, 2024: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 4442 and House Bill 5574."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Severin, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please state your point."

Severin: "I have in the gallery Waltonville High School Youth and Government. If they would stand with their instructors, Ms. Anderson and Ms. Wisniewski. We appreciate them being here. They're here for this weekend for the Youth and Government program. They're going to take home some hardware and do a fantastic job. So, I'd like to welcome to the House Floor

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Waltonville High School Youth and Government. Thank you very much."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Proceeding to the Order of Senate Bills on Second Reading. Senate Bill 15, Representative Ann Williams. Mr. Clerk, please read the Bill."

Clerk Hollman: "Senate Bill 15, a Bill for an Act concerning education. This Bill was read a second time previously. No Committee Amendments. No Floor Amendments. No Motions are filed."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Third Reading. Mr. Clerk, please read the Bill."

Clerk Hollman: "Senate Bill 15, a Bill for an Act concerning education. Third Reading of this Senate Bill."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ann Williams."

Williams, A.: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. In June of 2021, after years of public input, negotiation, and debate, we passed legislation that would bring an elected school board to Chicago for the first time. This heavily negotiated agreement included a two-year phase-in period, where the board would be made of half elected and half appointed members, before transitioning to a fully-elected board to ensure adequate time for an orderly transition in what will be a major change in governance. For many years prior to that, there were strong voices in favor of a fully-elected board, myself included, and other strong voices who pushed for a permanent hybrid version. At the end of the day, we did what we often do, we compromised, which will provide for a two-year hybrid transition period, then a fully-elected board two years after. It passed the House with 70 votes in favor. Today, we

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are voting on how to implement the agreement passed in 2021 in a way that would allow every Chicagoan to be able to vote in year one and provide for every Chicagoan to be represented on the inaugural board, all while ensuring a smooth and responsible transition under a fair and equitable map which reflects the diversity of our student population. Last spring, Speaker Welch put together a working group to figure it out, how to make all that happen. The result is the Bill that you have before you today, which you already voted on in the fall Veto Session. The map itself is a compilation of ideas that were presented from members of the public, advocacy organizations, and colleagues. The process as to how to actually implement the elections was sketched out on a piece of paper by our working group members as we brainstormed to figure out the best way to get to a fully-elected board while providing for a smooth transition as was laid out in 2021. I am proud of the work that we did, and while not perfect, it's a workable, fair, equitable, and responsible way to give a voice and vote to every single Chicagoan right out of the gate. Let me explain briefly why I think this is the best approach to... for this moment in time and the best plan to serve our students and communities. Like most of you in this room, like many of you in this room, I was a vocal supporter of a fully-elected board for many years and voted on it many times. If this debate were happening a year ago, I'd still be pushing for a fully-elected board. But now, with the first election just months away, CPS needs time to prepare and needs time to plan. CPS is a \$9 billion agency, which services over 325 thousand students. As someone whose district lies fully

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in Chicago, it feels irresponsible to completely turn over the governance of Chicago Public Schools in a matter of months without adequate time to plan. As I've referenced, this Bill has been in the works for years, over a decade I believe. It was discussed and voted on several times during the Emanuel administration. It was passed under the Lightfoot administration. And it will be implemented under the Johnson administration. So, this isn't about any one mayor or any one mayor's education policy. The Bill will actually begin the process of removing the governance of the city only 10 months from now and will be fully divested in 2027. Here in the GA, we will continue to oversee the education of Illinois and Chicago students and create policies in line with the priorities of our students. Whether it be about school resource officers, such as the Bill which passed out of committee today, or the integrity of selective enrollment and magnet schools, an issue which is important to me and many others here, the role of LSCs, or matters pertaining to curriculum. That's what we do here, and that's what we will continue to do. But here's the beauty of it. This is democracy. Can we get a little bit of... can we get a little order? It's kind of loud. Thanks. Here's the beauty of this all. This is democracy. Any Chicagoan can support or vote for a candidate who reflects their values and priorities for the public schools and the future of their children's education, starting this November and ramping up after the transitional period. So, if we do nothing, this Bill would likely get tied up in the courts and the status quo of an appointed board would remain. But that doesn't get any closer to bringing

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democracy to the Chicago Public Schools. Let's talk to our neighbors. Let's discuss the issues. Let's build coalitions. Let's urge people to run. Let's bring democracy to the Chicago Public Schools. Happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Windhorst is recognized."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "She indicates she will. You may proceed."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Representative. Just have a few questions about the Bill. You had mentioned that we had voted on a version of this previously in this Body. Was that Senate Bill 689? Is that correct?"

Williams, A.: "That's correct."

Windhorst: "And if you could, briefly go through how the board initially will be structured."

Williams, A.: "So, in the fall of 2024, this fall, there will be 10 seats up for election. And we have divided the state into... or, I'm sorry, divided the city into 10 districts and nested those. So, there's, for example, District 1 is 1A and 1B. In 2024, there would be an elect... whoever wins, say they win in 1A, they have a two-year term. The person would be appointed from 1B. Thereafter, in 2026, the elections would be staggered. So, whoever was elected in 1A would then... that would be a four-year term. 1B would then be a two-year term elected. So, we'd have the staggered elections. And I have a really easy chart if you want me to bring that over afterwards."

Windhorst: "And these... the district has been... or the city has been divided into a map with those districts. Is that correct?"

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Williams, A.: "That's correct. And the good news here is that the map, after many hearings, many conversations with the public, with the community groups, with organizations all across the city, we've come to an agreement on the map that we feel is fair, equitable, and best reflects the diversity of our city."

Windhorst: "And who drew those maps?"

Williams, A.: "Those maps were drawn with House and Senate together working on those."

Windhorst: "House and Senate Members?"

Williams, A.: "We... we used those based on community input that we received over, I don't know, 13, 14 hearings, the House alone. Senate did similar amount of hearings over there, and we incorporated all the input, priorities of community members on what they'd like the future of their Chicago school board districts to look like. And we worked through that process and put together the map that you see here today."

Windhorst: "Well, taking that input, who came up with the final product that we're voting on today?"

Williams, A.: "Correct."

Windhorst: "Who came up with that product?"

Williams, A.: "That was a compilation of efforts between the House and the Senate to put a map together that reflect those priorities that we heard from the community and from colleagues as well. Community organizations, advocacy groups, anyone that wanted to share, we took it into account and came up with a final product."

Windhorst: "Going forward, who will draw the maps or any... make any changes to the maps that are necessary after these maps are approved, if they are?"

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Williams, A.: "Well, as the law stands now, that responsibility still stays with the General Assembly, but I know there... there's here in the chamber and otherwise that would like to see this within the control of the City of Chicago. And I think that seems reasonable and fair, and we'll probably revisit that issue in the future."

Windhorst: "But as the law stands, this Body will be charged with making any modifications to the map going forward?"

Williams, A.: "For the redistricting, right now that responsibility stays the same. This Bill does not change that. But, again, I think there's a lot of interest in having the conversation about moving that over to the city."

Windhorst: "Are there any ethical provisions included in this Bill?"

Williams, A.: "Yes. If you recall, in the fall we passed a trailer Bill to 689 over to the Senate, which incorporated this similar language to what they've included in this Bill today. And what that is, is basically aligning the ethical requirements for Chicago public school board, making them identical to the ones that apply to your school board and all other school boards across the state."

Windhorst: "Is there any provision regarding the pay for school board members?"

Williams, A.: "There is not. Like every other board in Illinois, this board is unpaid."

Windhorst: "Are there any prohibitions on individuals being eligible to serve, such as those who are employed by the school district?"

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Williams, A.: "Active employees of the Chicago Public Schools in the city cannot apply, yes."

Windhorst: "Is there any prohibition against Chicago Teachers Union members being on the board?"

Williams, A.: "They can run, but they can't be an active teacher at the same time they're on the board."

Windhorst: "Is there any restriction on sources of political contributions to candidates for the school board?"

Williams, A.: "This has no specific requirements with regard to who can contribute and participate in the campaigns."

Windhorst: "And so, again, members of the Chicago Teachers Union can make contributions to candidates for this office."

Williams, A.: "It's similar to the laws that apply to us in terms of campaign finance. Any organization, whether it be a group advocating for charter schools, whether it be a union, all of those are able to contribute."

Windhorst: "In our analysis we have a list of opponents to the Bill. Are you aware of opposition to this Bill?"

Williams, A.: "I have heard from opponents, yes."

Windhorst: "And it looks like African International House, Black American Voters Project, Black Community Collaborative, Black United Fund, Chicago Union (sic-Urban) Art Retreat Center, Chicago Westside Branch of the NAACP, and the National Housing Residents Association are all listed as opponents. Are you aware of what their opposition is?"

Williams, A.: "You know, I sat through the Senate hearing and also our hearing yesterday, and I have reviewed the concerns of the opponents. Most of the concerns seem to be... some are based on a misunderstanding of the Bill. There's a belief

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that not everyone can vote and have a representative in year one. The House Bill specifically was crafted to allow everyone to have a vote in year one. So, the way we've nested the districts, everyone gets to vote in year one. It's only... the appointment comes from the half of the district where there is not a successful elected person. So, there is a, I grant it unorthodox, but there is a mechanism to ensure everyone is... not only gets to vote, but they get to be represented. For the first two years, those districts, those larger districts, will be represented by two people. It's only after that, that they would be staggered and a regular election would take place. It was the best way we could come with a transition that would allow everyone to vote and everyone to be represented."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Morgan is recognized."

Morgan: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "To the Bill."

Morgan: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank Chair Williams and those who have worked on this legislation. I know it's many years in the making. I've paid close attention to the evolution of this legislation, and I believe moving to an elected school board in Chicago is long overdue because ultimately, at its core, it provides accountability. Accountability. While I don't represent any part of Chicago, both of my parents worked in the Chicago Public Schools for over 30 years. And they were members of the Chicago Teachers Union. So, I'm very familiar with this decades-long effort towards an elected school board. Yet, I have some concerns.

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Being honest, my concern about this legislation is rooted less in the alternating preferences of the mayor or CTU and more in the historic and alarming rise of anti-Semitism in Chicago Public Schools. We have not addressed this issue on the Illinois House Floor, but I've been increasingly concerned with the unchecked expansion of anti-Semitism in Chicago Public Schools. Nearly a year ago, I met with the leadership of CTU with a number of Jewish organizations in Chicago to address this issue and to talk about the frequent anti-Semitism being expressed by some CPS teachers and shockingly happening not just on social media, but inside the classroom, making Jewish students feel unsafe in Chicago Public Schools. CTU responded in the meeting by saying that they oppose hate and discrimination against anyone. But actions, my friends, speak louder than words. Because there has been no response since that meeting to our repeated requests for education, training, and addressing these issues of anti-Semitism in Chicago Public Schools. None. No response. In the recent months, anti-Semitism has exploded in CPS. Just over a month ago, Jewish high school students hid in a bathroom because of the fear they had for their own safety. They hid in a bathroom because they were Jewish and didn't feel safe in their schools. The mayor indicated that he was 'incredibly proud' of the students and teachers who were threatening the safety of those Jewish students that day. He was incredibly proud. CTU helped organize teachers to participate in those protests, again, causing Jewish students to feel unsafe in their own school. And they were silent in the days and weeks and months after because these Jewish

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student's safety was threatened. I'm willing to bet most of my colleagues are unaware that there is now a U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights investigation that has begun because of that anti-Semitism that has raged unchecked at the Chicago Public Schools. All the while, elected leaders in the City of Chicago and leaders of the CTU have been silent. It doesn't seem to matter to them. Their inaction has frightened Jewish families in Chicago. And the most urgent question that I have is, where is the accountability for the anti-Semitism in the Chicago Public Schools? To me, an elected school board actually offers that accountability. If elected leaders and teacher's union leadership in Chicago refuse to hold people accountable for this hatred, I trust the public to do that, to do so. And that's what this legislation offers. So, to close, I support this legislation, as it will bring accountability, has long been lacking in the Chicago Public Schools to elect independent school board members. And for those Chicago leaders who have willingly turned a blind eye to rising anti-Semitism in CPS, you must finally step up to address this hate and discrimination. It is both the right thing to do, and also, if you continue to stay silent against hate, you, too, will face accountability. Thank you, Madam Speaker."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Wilhour is recognized."

Wilhour: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Bill, please."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "To the Bill."

Wilhour: "Thank you. I'm here today not just to speak but to sound the alarm on Senate Bill 15, which is a blatant power grab masquerading as reform. Only here in Illinois could we twist

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something as noble as elections into a tool for political cronies to tighten their grip on our system. Senate Bill 15 is a Trojan Horse, folks. It's a gift. Absolute control to the teachers' unions over the Chicago school board. Don't be fooled. This is not about empowering voters. It's about rigging the game, ensuring that the house always wins, and what's the prize? A state that's already breaking the bank on education, yet is failing miserably in education outcomes. The stats are in, and folks, the folks in this Body should be ashamed. The vast majority of the Chicago's black students can't read. They can't do math at grade level. There are schools within the district that not a single student is meeting the education standard set forth by the State Board of Education. And this Bill's answer is more power to the unions that are failing and selling out our students. If their stranglehold wasn't choking schools enough already, what changes with Senate Bill 15? Nothing. It's a farce. It offers zero solutions, zero accountability. It makes things worse, not better. The real problem isn't a lack of union power. It's been too much power for too long. We're not here to fix education today, it seems. No, we're here to hand out favors to pay back political debts so some of you who took their blood money for your campaigns, they can keep the gravy train rolling. And this message is to everyone in here taking money from these corrupt, self-serving unions. Send it back. Speak up or be complicit with the others selling out our future for two bits of silver from these unions. I will never do that. I'll fight for kids and honest teachers around this state who want what's best for our classrooms, not what's best for the

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unions who send you the checks. If we actually cared about our kids, about real education, this Bill would be in the trash, not in this chamber. Vote 'no' on Senate Bill 15. Stop the charade. It's a time for choosing in this Body. Political games, continued political games, or our children's futures. I'm picking the kids every time, and I hope you do too."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Evans is recognized."

Evans: "Thank you, Madam Speaker and the great Members of the Assembly. I have to take a deep breath after the last comment. I'm looking forward to that Representative's vote on evidence-based funding increase to give more money to the South Suburbs and to the South Side of Chicago. I can't wait until you're there to give more money to schools like me and Rep Davis' community. I had to take a deep breath on that one. To the Bill. The voices of my community, the children of my community that we've been fighting for are finally realized. You know, I have the pleasure of representing the South Suburbs of Chicago where they have an elected school board, where the people from that community, Lansing, Burnham, Calumet City, they come together and they have a voice for their education. And me being a father now, understanding the importance of having an impact, picking, making decisions for my black son, I want my community to make decisions for the black community of Chicago, for the Latino community of Chicago, for every community of Chicago. I want those voices to be there and have a strong voice. And right now we have a piece of legislation that moves us in that direction. We have not done anything to this point. The voiceless have been shut out. Now, we have an opportunity to

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do that. And it's because our mayor, our new mayor, made a promise to do that, and that's now being done. Many folks have talked about it, but now it's being supported by city hall and it's moving forward. And I want to thank my colleague, Representative Williams, and all of my colleagues, like Representative Buckner, like our Congresswoman Delia Ramirez, who put the work in to make this happen. So, I can't wait to cast the vote to have somebody from my community go down to make the decisions for my school. And lastly, there's been a lot of comments made about CTU and black union leadership. It's a reality. We have black union leaders, and they're going to be talking about black issues. Just like we're going to have women leaders. They're going to be talking about women's issues, you know. This is not the past. We're moving forward. So, get ready and get comfortable with the realities of society. We need diversity in all spaces. But, most importantly, we want to make sure that those black kids that can't read, it's all over now. We're going to fully fund education in my community. We're going to fully support this new elected school board. And the other side of the aisle is going to lead the way. Will Davis, relax. You're going to do a lot less work now because educating black children is now the priority of my colleagues on the other side. And, again, I'm... I'm in shock, but I'm excited about that. We're going to send them all to University of Illinois because they don't have a lot of black children there. We're going to revolutionize education. Ann Williams, Democrats, relax. It's all over now. They're going to take control and educate all of the black children, and we're going to get it done. So,

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thank you, Ann Williams, and cast a vote. A voice for my community, let's do it."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Andrade is recognized."

Andrade: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Sorry, I'm a little emotional. Grandma passed away this morning. Mom... my mom's on the way to... but I stand here today not as a State Rep, but as a father of a daughter who has got accepted into a select enrollment school, which should be her proudest day ever, but her mother said you should've seen your face. It was all excitement, sad, proud, everything at once. Because I don't know if you're familiar, but there was a private briefing that we had with CPS board, which was recorded. I didn't know, maybe I did, but it ended up on channel five news. I asked a question to the CPS board. I want to know what is their intentions with select enrollment schools. Because... and I had that question yesterday, and someone said the Representative deserves an answer. I said no, Jamie Andrade the father, the parent deserves an answer of what is the intention of the school. Because she is turning down a scholarship for another school because it's her dream, and our dream was to send her to a selective enrollment CPS school. But I've been told by a certain union that they have intentions to change selective enrollment. They have intentions to ask for funding to be changed. These students are taxpayers, and they deserve their school to be fully funded. But they want to change how they're funded and basically defund the highest performing schools in CPS. So, I ask the Governor, as my Governor, as... to not sign the Bill until we get a response. What is their intentions? How... because as a parent, we deserve to know what is their

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intention for the next few years. Because my daughter and all these CPS parents that send their kids to selective enrollment schools because it's a choice. There is a choice, and they're making that choice. But I think, unfortunately, we have to make that choice on the false belief that the school she's going to go to is not going to change. So, I fought for a fully-elected school board, but now we have a half board. I spoke to the president of CPS this morning. He says, at this moment, there is no changes. That's the word. They are not looking at dockets. They are not looking at anything. But that doesn't mean tomorrow or anything. So, if they are not looking at anything, the administration should not have a problem with us passing House Bill 5766, which puts a moratorium on changes to selective enrollment until it's a fully-elected school board. So, I ask the mayor, I ask the CPS board to tell the father of a daughter who's been elected, who's been chosen to go to that school. I want her... she texted me yesterday, says, 'Dad, I saw that the Senate passed the hybrid Bill. What does this mean for my school?' And I had to tell her I don't know because I am not getting the... an answer. I asked, are they going to change testing? We're not talking about testing right now. Are you going to change selective enrollment schools? They say we're not closing schools. They're not answering my question. So, I am fortunate enough, blessed to be elected and represent my community. And so, I even received calls, and other State Reps have received calls, from parents from CPS. They want to know what is the intention if they send their kid to a selective enrollment school. They're using words as hold harmless. What that means is they

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will defund the highest performance schools in future years, but they won't (unintelligible). So, those are the words being used. Hold harmless. Oh, that... but, basically, it's a code word for defunding the highest performing schools. These schools have given an opportunity for black and Latino, Asian, all of them from immigrant families to receive an education second to none. And we don't know what their intention is, to change them or not. So, I am asking my Governor, ask that question. I am asking every CPS parent that has sent their kid that's been chosen to ask the mayor's office, ask CP... CPS board what is their intention. We, as parents and as taxpayers, deserve to know the truth. They have fought so hard to get into power because they said there was no transparency before. Well, I expect transparency. Our taxpayers expect transparency. And the father of a daughter who wants a question answered wants transparency. I should be able to make my decision and our family should make our decision based on the truth. If you want to change it, then let us know. I... unfortunately, we're forcing her to go to another school because I want to feel comfortable of what she's getting into. So, I will vote for the Bill, but I just want to go on record. We deserve the truth to know the intentions of this CPS board because we are giving them, right now, the power. Even though it requires two-thirds vote to change something in CPS, but they already... I promise you now, I hope I'm wrong, but they are already looking at defunding these schools. And they call it hold harmless, but I call it defunding future funding for the school. So, thank you very much, Madam Speaker."

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Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Crespo is recognized."

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "She indicates she will."

Crespo: "Congratulations, Representative. I know you spent a lot of time in working on this project. I just have a couple of questions. When drawing the map, did the committee use the Citizen Voting Age Population?"

Williams, A.: "We did not use the Citizen Voting Age Population, no."

Crespo: "You didn't? You did not?"

Williams, A.: "Okay, the American Community Survey uses those numbers you referenced, and we have, based on data, found that that is not an accurate representation and might jeopardize this if it came to a legal challenge. So, that was not the... the demographic information we utilized here."

Crespo: "Okay, thank you. In terms of the requirement to get on the ballot, my understanding is that they have to get a thousand signatures."

Williams, A.: "Yeah."

Crespo: "How did you come up with a thousand?"

Williams, A.: "The districts were approximately the size of Senate districts. And so, we utilized that our basis. When the districts become 20 and smaller districts, then we will use a number similar to the House. So, that's what we based it on, size."

Crespo: "Did they consider using the model used by the alderman? Isn't the requirement less?"

Williams, A.: "We felt comfortable. Based on the size of the districts moving forward, it was kind a group decision that

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that was the best way to ensure we had people that were willing to put in the work and... and do that but not make it inaccessible for people, just like we do here in the House and Senate."

Crespo: "Okay, thank you. To... to the Bill. I don't represent Chicago. I am proud to say I was born there, so I respect whatever they want to do. I think there are two issues that concern me. When we passed this Bill originally, there was some questions as to whether there was going to be a financial impact to the state or the city. And there was a report that was put out. We did get the State Board of Education to interpret the report for us, and it is still unclear to me whether at some point there's going to be a financial impact on the state. So, I'm concerned about that. And finally, I think we know that they have expressed their intentions or have expressed they want to get paid, they want to have a salary. Obviously, I hope that never happens. I have the second largest school unit in the State of Illinois in my district. So, they've been doing a great job. They have... they haven't been paid for that. In Los Angeles, they do have an elected school board. They do get paid at the tune of, like, \$120 thousand, plus they have staff. So, those two things concern me. I'll still listen to the debate to decide what I'm going to do. But, once again, Representative, congratulations. I think you've done a fantastic job so far. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Buckner is recognized."

Buckner: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "She indicated she will."

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Buckner: "First off, much like my... my Chicago public school classmate, Leader Evans, I'm a little flabbergasted at the Gentleman from 110th District's diatribe. As a Chicago black student who reads very well, I will say that for those in my district who have reading comprehension issues, I will welcome that Representative to refund some of the money that Chicago sends to your district to help us out. But, Representative Williams, how are you?"

Williams, A.: "Wonderful. Thank you, Representative."

Buckner: "A couple questions. One, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and a number of other organizations, like the Coalition of African American Leaders, was really concerned about making sure that we had advisory boards for black student achievement. Is that in this Bill?"

Williams, A.: "Yes, that was included. It's called the Chicago Board of Education Black Student Achievement Advisory Board. And it really was created to provide black students with maximum opportunity for success, both through elementary and then on through secondary education. And... and the board can take and run with this, and there's a lot of opportunities for them to really make a difference in the lives of these students."

Buckner: "Fantastic. Thank you. Also, I just want to make sure I understand the makeup of some of these districts correctly. I know I was one of those folks who was really concerned about making sure that the districts looked like the school district. Obviously, considering our legal... legal restraints, the maps needed to reflect the City of Chicago, right, and not the districts one-to-one. But am I correct in my

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understanding that of 20 districts, 7 of them are majority black, 6 are majority Latino, 2 have strong Latino influence based on population, and 2 will have strong Asian American influence based on population? Is that correct?"

Williams, A.: "That is correct."

Buckner: "Fantastic. To the Bill. I, for years, have been a huge proponent of a fully-elected school board as soon as possible, and that doesn't change with my vote on this Bill today. This is a transition that is nearly 190 years in the making. Creating an elected body with a \$9 billion budget, we cannot be haphazard about it. We still have work to do, to Representative Crespo's point. We have work to do on campaign finance, on whether or not board members will be salaried, on codifying a process for the city council or the board to draw their own maps from here on out. We also need to have respectful and robust conversations on about... about a number of other pressing issues that involve the CPS system, like selective enrollment. Representative Croke has a Bill that should be the focal point of that conversation. And SROs and LSCs, Representative Gill has a Bill that should be the focal point of that conversation. But today we get a chance to finish the work on this specific issue. I'm a third-generation CPS product. And because of what we are doing now, my son will not only just be a fourth-generation CPS product, but he will be the first generation of my family enrolled in the CPS system with an elected representative school board. That's a big deal to me. We have been engaged in this fight for a long time. Those who have been a Member of this... Members of this Body for a while have voted on this legislation five,

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six, seven, eight, fifty-'leven times. The process worked, and this process that we are putting in place today will work. This isn't just about getting it done. This is about getting it right. We have to resist the temptation of a quick fix. These are our kids, so just good enough will not do. This gives us the chance to get it right. We all want to reach an elected school board as soon as possible, but it's okay to take the stairs to get there. Our young people deserve it. Thank you, Representative Williams, for your work on this, and everybody on the working group. It's a long time coming. Thanks."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ugaste is recognized."

Ugaste: "Thank you. To the Bill. I applaud the idea of electing the school board for the City of Chicago. People throughout the State of Illinois have that. But if we're going to do that, I believe we should do it in total, and that's why I won't be voting for this. Don't quite understand what the difference is between holding elections in 10 parts of the city but not the full 20 in which this district... the city's divided into for these various districts. If we're capable of doing it for 10, we should be capable of doing it for 20. I also... to the various speakers who mentioned that they hope that certain members on this side of the aisle surrender money to the Chicago schools for their education, I would point out the Chicago student... schools on average per student are spending \$12 thousand more than in my hometown. So, I don't think money's the issue. Not certain what the issue is. But what I do know is, I believe that instead of looking at what we should be doing for the people, for the students, the

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teachers union in Chicago, the Chicago Teachers Union's having far too much say. I applaud the Representative who brought up the selective school units and believe that that is another reason why not to vote for this today because we should have an answer on that. I will be coming over to support House Bill 5766 and believe that we should have the right answers to the questions before we take a vote and just not say here's what we need to do in order to get this done in a manner that is possibly the best way we can. Because I don't think it is the best way. And to the other Representatives who spoke and are looking for more state funding for various schools in their district, I believe the Southland was mentioned, please look at HB4866. It's a way for not only more state funding to all schools within the state, but also property tax relief. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Speaker Welch is recognized."

Speaker Welch: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today in strong support of Senate Bill 15. But before I say a few words about the Bill, I want to begin by giving a huge thank you to this Bill's Sponsor. I'd ask that this Body give a warm applause to a champion on this issue, Representative Ann Williams. Thank you, Representative, for bringing this Bill to the floor today. I also have to acknowledge her collaborative partners on this Bill because this truly has been a team effort. So, to the Members of our House Democratic CPS district, districting working group, Representative Mike Kelly, Representative Eva-Dina Delgado, Representative Will Guzzardi, Representative Curtis Tarver, and Representative Kam Buckner. Let's also give them a round of applause, please.

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Thank you all for your leadership on this historic effort. And I use that word, it's not an exaggeration. We are making history here today. Let me take us back a little bit. In 1995, people sitting in these same seats took power away from Chicago parents and Chicago taxpayers to decide what was best for their school. Now, I've spent my public service career representing suburban communities. And as many of you know, I started by serving on my local school board. My community sent me to that school board, and elected me, and re-elected me to do the things that they believed were in the best interest of that district. In fact, many of us sitting here today got our starts on our local school board. Everywhere in this state, except the City of Chicago, the people elected them and sent them to make those decisions on those school boards. So, I can only imagine how much it pains Chicago parents to be shut out of their children's education, to not have a neighbor that they can turn to when they have a question or an opinion about how their schools are run, to see the local schools closed while investment and opportunity flow to other parts of the city, to see a district serving more black, Latinx, and Asian families than almost any school district in the country being led solely by people who don't look like them, who don't know their neighborhoods, and who don't answer to them. So, here today, we're correcting an injustice done on a generation of Chicago families and we're charting a brighter future for generations to come. And that change is coming fast. With this vote today, Chicagoans in every part of the city can start circulating petitions to run for school board just three weeks from now. Regular, everyday

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people can get a petition, a box of pens, and go run for office just like all of you. And every Chicagoan will be able to vote for an elected representative school board this November. The people will vote. The people will decide. The people will determine what happens in their local district, just like they do in all of your districts. And they'll continue to elect the board they choose in districts that look like Chicago, created directly from the testimony we receive from community organizations. When you consider the gravity of this change, the creation of a new governing body tasked not only with the multi-million... multi-billion-dollar budget, but with the education and safety of our children, it's no wonder it has been a long, deliberate process, complete with passionate disagreement and a whole lot of compromises. And as we stand up this new board, it will continue to require deliberation and a lot more compromise. And that's a good thing because that's democracy. That's democracy with a big D. And democracy is what we're giving back to Chicago families today. We, as a House, have stood strong in that commitment and stood by the compromises made that made this board possible after years of negotiation. And for that reason, I rise today and ask for a vote in favor of Senate Bill 15 and ask for a vote for the people to decide who represents them. By voting 'yes', we're saying let the people vote, let the people decide. I urge an 'aye' vote. Thank you, Members."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ann Williams to close."

Williams, A.: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I close, I just wanted to touch on a few items that came up in debate. First

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of all, it seems like there might be a little confusion on the other side of the aisle about what this Bill actually does. If we wanted to empower the mayor and his allies, we'd actually do nothing, leaving them with a fully-appointed board. So, there's that. To Representative Morgan's point, I want to recognize and thank you for your comments about the safety of Jewish students in our schools, and I pledge to stand with you and work to fight for candidates who will stand strong against anti-Semitism. To my good friend, colleague Representative Andrade, who has been fighting this fight alongside me for many years, you speak for a lot of parents today and I will continue to fight alongside you for... for your daughter and many others like her that want to achieve the highest levels in Chicago. So, thank you for your comments. Also, Speaker Welch, thank you for giving me the opportunity to work on this and kind of bring it across the finish line. It's something that's so important to my community and something we've been working on for years. So, thank you for your leadership. I have to echo Speaker Welch's comments about the working group. They have been fabulous. I couldn't ask for a better group to work with. Staff, of course, has been working on this for a decade, so they're ready to get this thing wrapped up. But I have to call attention to Jon Maxson, whose grasp of the issue, organizational style, and skillset has really enabled us to translate our vision into a very equitable map and been such a pleasure to work with. So, thank you, Jon. And, of course, this never would've happened without many, many advocates who have pushed for the elected school board for years. I think

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one of my first meetings in my office when I was elected several years ago was on the elected school board. And at that time, I was not convinced, but I sure am now. Thanks to all those who took the time to testify, to attend a meeting, to send an email, to make a phone call. So grateful for your willingness to lend your passion and your perspective to bring democracy to the Chicago Public Schools. Plus, I would be... finally, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize my former colleague in the House, and now Senator, Rob Martwick, whose unwavering fight brought us to where we are today to bring democracy to Chicago Public Schools. So, thank you, Rob. And with that, I hope for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "The question is, 'Shall Senate Bill 15 pass?' All in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, take the record. On this question, there are 75 voting in 'favor', 31 voting 'against', 3 voting 'present'. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Under Concurrences appears HB779, offered by Leader Smith. Leader Smith on the Motion."

Smith: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move to concur Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 779."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Windhorst, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Windhorst: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "He indicates he will."

Windhorst: "Leader Smith, if you could briefly describe the changes that occurred in the Senate. It looks like that there

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were some significant changes in that Body. If you could briefly go through those for us."

Smith: "Absolutely. HB779 modernizes the Pawnbroker Regulation Act. It's an agreed compromised measure. It came about following lengthy negotiations with the IDFPR, the industry, and consumer advocacy groups, and the Bill does three things. It provides new consumer protections, it modernizes regulations, and it also contains important data disclosures that will give regulators and Members of this Body and the public the insight we need to ensure that law provides fair capital access to our communities. In short, it's an agreed Bill. It's good for consumers, it's good for small businesses, and it's good for Illinois."

Windhorst: "I noted there was some opposition in committee on the... on the Motion. And from what I've heard, I just wanted to get your response to the objections that I've heard to the... to the Bill. There is a cap on the number of licenses in this state. Is that correct?"

Smith: "That is correct. We currently have about 209 licensed pawnbrokers in Illinois. The cap is at 250. It's... it's the early stages of this. We realize that the cap, if it's... if it's too limiting to the industry, we'll take another look at it in a couple of years. But there's no... there's no mad rush to open pawnbroker establishments in Illinois. That number at around 200 has been that way for the last several years."

Windhorst: "And are we sure that the number is 200? Are we sure on that number?"

Smith: "It's approximately 209, to be exact."

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Windhorst: "Well, one of the objections to the cap is, I... I don't believe there's another industry that has a cap on licenses. Do you know if there is another industry that has a cap?"

Smith: "I'm not aware of that. But I know the cap was put in place to just be able to monitor the existing establishments, any new establishments, and to keep a close eye on any potential out-of-state folks coming in and just opening up a pawn store and not following these new regulations."

Windhorst: "And that oversight of regulation gets to my next point. I've heard objections that we are putting more work on IDFPR..."

Smith: "Well, that's one reason..."

Windhorst: "...a department that already has a lot on its plate. Could you address that?"

Smith: "Absolutely. Well, remember now, this is an initiative of... of IDFPR. So, they... they are accepting that challenge. A part of that, which I know you'll get to in your... in your comments, is the increase in the licensing fee. So, the fee is being increased in order to add additional staff to be able to monitor the industry."

Windhorst: "Well, you must've seen my notes 'cause that was exactly my next point. So, the fee increase, it will assist with the monitoring, and there is... I guess by you acknowledging, that there is a fee increase in this Bill, what... what is the prior fee and what is the fee increased to?"

Smith: "Prior fee is 1 thousand. It will go to 2 thousand."

Windhorst: "From 1 thousand to 2 thousand? Is that correct?"

Smith: "Yes."

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Windhorst: "All right. I believe you'll see both support and opposition on this side of the aisle. I appreciate you answering my questions."

Smith: "Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ugaste is recognized."

Ugaste: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "He indicates he will."

Ugaste: "Representative, just... if you already spoke to this or it was asked of you, I do apologize. But is this a agreed Bill between the pawnbrokers and the IDFPR? Did they work this out?"

Smith: "As... as well as the consumer advocacy groups. All three groups."

Ugaste: "Okay. And the amount of the fee hike, the brokers were okay with because they want further regulation to make certain everyone in the industry's playing by the same rules was my understanding?"

Smith: "Absolutely. It's fair and... and equitable amongst all licensed pawnbrokers."

Ugaste: "Okay. To the Bill. While I am not overly fond of a cap, seeing as how there's plenty of room for more people and a commitment from the Sponsor to look at it again if we ever need to raise it, as well as the fact that it sort of designates what parts of the state will have certain number of licenses, given that the industry, the advocates, and the regulators sat down and worked this out, I will be supporting the Bill. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Ammons is recognized."

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Ammons: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Sponsor yield for a quick question?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "He indicates he will."

Ammons: "Thank you. Leader Smith, I just want to ask, in the process of this particular Bill that's going to collect some information statewide, which we certainly need, would it cover at all... I was just told last, maybe a week or two ago, that pawnbrokers are charging consumers additional insurance within the period of time that they are supposed to be able to reclaim their items in order to then insure these things. Was that at all part of the conversation you all had?"

Smith: "I... I am not aware of that."

Ammons: "Okay."

Smith: "I'm not aware of that, but I will ask about it."

Ammons: "And would this Bill, the data that they're collecting, would it look at some of those other areas of how the industry works?"

Smith: "Well, its... the intention of this Bill is definitely to take a closer look at the practices, whether it's interest rates or fees..."

Ammons: "Yeah."

Smith: "...and all of those things. That's why we brought this Bill forward. It's really to protect consumers, but also still allow these small businesses to exist. So..."

Ammons: "I mean, I don't have a problem. I love pawnbrokers. I love to go... I'm a... you know, that kind of shopping. So, I don't have a problem with going. But when I got the call last, maybe a week or so ago, someone reached out to us and said, hey, are you all aware that they're making people now pay an

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insurance to reclaim their items? I would love for the group to have a look at this."

Smith: "I'm not aware of that, but I'll take a look at it and I'll definitely get back to you on that."

Ammons: "Thank you so much. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Guzzardi is recognized."

Guzzardi: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "He indicates he will."

Guzzardi: "Just a quick question for you, Leader Smith. Thank you for bringing this Bill forward, and I appreciate your long work on this issue. Can you just talk about the question of APR and fees versus interest? Can you walk us through that just a little bit?"

Smith: "Sure, you clearly are a number guy. So, the rates, the new rates, they're on a scale of determining the... how large the pawn operation is, obviously. Larger the pawn operation, the different scale they have to adhere to. The smaller operation is a different scale. The amount of money is... is a sliding scale as well. We have something here, a hundred... under \$500. It's still quite a high percentage rate, but it's not as high as it was. The more you borrow, the more valuable your pawn is, the lower the interest rate is. So, anything over 5 thousand is at a 60 percent APR as opposed to the previous APRs of 4 and 5 or 600 percent."

Guzzardi: "That's great. Thank you. I know there's been ongoing negotiation about this topic, and I know that many of us are proud of our collective work on the PLPA, working at that 36 percent rate cap. And this conversation of whether this constitutes an interest rate or a fee, right, and how that

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ought to affect the borrower, I know it's been going on for a long time. I appreciate your efforts at compromise here, and it seems like you've landed at a place where there's consensus. And I just wanted to make sure that we continue this dialogue, as your Bill does, to make sure that we're keeping an eye on this going forward and providing whatever additional consumer protections we might need. Thank you for your work, and I appreciate it."

Smith: "Thank you, and I assure you that we will be keeping a very close eye on this practice for the next couple of years."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Reick is recognized."

Reick: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "To the Bill."

Reick: "Representative Smith, I know you put a lot of work into this, and I applaud you for that. And you were very forthcoming with all of your answers in committee, and I appreciate that as well. In the committee I may... I raised the point that I have a problem with limiting the number of licenses. I think, to some extent, that creates a barrier to entry. And the fact that we have a limited number of licenses available might drive people who are in need of money to other means of raising that money, such as going out on the street and doing it through loan sharks and things like that. I... for that reason, I voted against the Amendment in committee. And I'm afraid I'm going to vote against it here on the floor for the same reason. I... I think a regulated pawnbroker industry would be a much better way, with as many... with as many participants as would be needed to satisfy the need, would be a much better way of regulating what would become otherwise

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out-of-control lending costs and possible other problems with it. So, while I applaud your... your intent on this, I can't support the Bill. Thank you, Sir."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Fritts is recognized."

Fritts: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "To the Bill."

Fritts: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, this Bill does two things that I want to highlight that are pretty dangerous. I mean, number one, it's a fee increase, which is a very classy way for us all to say tax increase. Once again, here we go again in Illinois putting a tax increase in place. Number two, and the thing that I think is most... most troubling, at least to me, and I know my friend from McHenry County touched on it, and that is we're instituting a license cap. And as the Sponsor had said earlier, this is one of the first industries that we're actually instituting this license cap on. It's a very slippery slope for the future on what other barrier... barriers to entry we're going to put in place. For this reason, you know, we're limiting competition in the marketplace. Competition's made this country go round for a really long time. And for these two reasons, I urge a strong 'no' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Caulkins is recognized."

Caulkins: "Thank you. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "He indicates he will."

Caulkins: "Representative Smith, the fee is an agreed upon fee where the industry, pawnbrokers in this state, have agreed to tax themselves, if you wish to use that term, in order to

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provide more oversight of their industry. Is that not correct?"

Smith: "There is an increase in the fee for a license. Yes."

Caulkins: "But the purpose of that increase is so that the regulatory agency can hire at least one more person to police this pawnbroker industry?"

Smith: "You are correct."

Caulkins: "So, in essence, the people that are in this industry are willing to pay more in order to more stridently enforce the rules that affect their business?"

Smith: "You are correct."

Caulkins: "Okay. How many current pawnbroker licenses do we have in Illinois? I missed.. missed the answer."

Smith: "According to my information, we have about 209."

Caulkins: "Two hundred and nine. So, there's still room for 41 more licenses. Do you know how long we've had 209 pawnbrokers in Illinois?"

Smith: "That number has hovered around that number for at least the last three or four years."

Caulkins: "Very good. So, we seem to have stabilized at around 200 pawnbrokers, and there is still room for another 40 some odd pawnbroker businesses to open. And if there are more than 40 that want to go in business in Illinois, is there anything that prohibits us from coming back and changing this legislation?"

Smith: "No. That is the beauty of our democracy, Sir."

Caulkins: "Very good. I want to thank you very much for your work on this. This.. this is one of those rare occasions where the industry and the government and the consumer groups have come

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together and agreed on a Bill to... that affects a business in Illinois. And thank you very much. I... I urge a 'yes' vote."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Smith to close."

Smith: "I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "The question is, 'Shall House concur in Senate Amendment 1 and 2 to House Bill 779?' This is final action. All those in favor signify by voting 'aye'; all those opposed signify by voting 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 80 voting 'aye', 27 voting 'nay', and 2 voting 'present'. The House does concur in Senate Amendment 1 and 2 to House Bill 779. And this Bill, receiving a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Scherer, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Scherer: "Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Today, I have two Pages for the day. They are both students at the University of Illinois here in Springfield. Very interested in government. So, my first person that I would like to introduce is Elijah Matthews, and Elijah majors in legal studies and political science. And give them a wave, Elijah. And then the second one is Colton Soto, and he is majoring in computer science. So, they've been around and many have signed their books. Thank you so much, and welcome to our State Capitol."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Yang Rohr, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Yang Rohr: "A point of personal privilege, please."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

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Yang Rohr: "Thank you. I just wanted to introduce my Page for the day and job shadow, Helen Liang. Helen is a junior at Naperville Central, the captain of her school's Congressional Debate team, and she has used her public speaking skills to really advocate for those in her community. She has shown great dedication to Youth Voices. It's a nonprofit that she champions, and it helps middle schoolers on speaking up, making sure that they have the confidence they need to advocate for themselves, and make sure that their voices are heard. She is also a student representative on the Naperville City Council and a student advisor in the Naperville Teen Suicide Disruptor Program. And just would just love for the Body to welcome Helen."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative McLaughlin, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

McLaughlin: "Thank you. I rise today to ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in congratulating the Governor on his proposal for the elimination of the grocery tax. As many of you know, and for those that don't know, the grocery tax never comes to Springfield, but stays in our local communities. As a former mayor, I understand the impact of how planned revenue disappearance overnight can impact a village's budget. That money is relied upon for public safety, services, and other expenditures at the local level. I was fortunate this Monday to be joined by a number of mayors in the 52nd District, and they conveyed many concerns about the

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budget hole that was created by the elimination of the grocery tax. I believe the Governor's Office has estimated between four and five hundred million dollars. Those losses in local revenues are a significant problem. Now, we all come down here to provide solutions, and people want us to provide solutions. Here's a simple one. Let's replace and return the Local Government Distributive Funds back to our communities, as required by state agreements, to 10 percent. There are several proposals in this Body and the Senate that will do exactly that. Further, when the mayors and village officials come to our offices, which they will all do over the next few weeks, asking the question what's going to happen to LGDF, please be direct. Tell them the truth. Look them right in the face and say we will not be giving you an increase. Or, which I'd hope, that we'd be returning that increase to 10 percent. There are... this is the only way that these communities can actually plan for what their obligations will be in their budgets. Many of these towns are going to lose between two and five percent of their general fund because of this. Can you imagine if we took two to five percent away from the general fund in Springfield? Where will these communities get the money from? Well, I've heard from my friends, it's going to be from cannabis and gambling. Unfortunately, many of the communities in my region don't have cannabis or gambling. When that money doesn't come, there's only one place to go, and that's property tax increases, my friends. Many of these communities are not Home Rule. I fear that this rise in property taxes is only going to increase the burden on families that can't afford it. So, please, let's actually do

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two things at once in Springfield. Let's eliminate the grocery tax. Let's replace it with LGDF so that these local mayors and local governments can provide the necessary services that we're sent down here to assure. Thank you, Madam Chair."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Jacobs is recognized."

Jacobs: "Thank you. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Jacobs: "I wanted to bring a very important message. There's a little team down in Mounds, Illinois called the Mounds Meridian Bobcats that happen to have won 68 to 60 by defeating the Hope Academy of Chicago to advance in the 1A Saturday in Champaign for state champions. I wanted to congratulate my team, the Meridian Bobcats. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Croke, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Croke: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to thank the Body and all of our... my colleagues because I brought my daughter, Hattie, down this week and everyone was so incredibly kind. Didn't matter what side of the aisle you were on because everyone loves babies. And I just want to say that I don't think that there is a more caring General Assembly than this one when it comes to helping people out and helping out everyone with their kid. So, thank you again."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Jones, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Jones: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Jones: "I would like to introduce my chief of staff in the gallery, Erica Jenkins, and then also Scott Nnamah and Jerico Thomas,

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who are public works commissioners in Calumet City. Please give them a Springfield welcome."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Bunting, for what reason do you seek Recognition?"

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Bunting: "Thank you. Today, 40 conservational planners, along with advocates of the soil and water conservation districts across the state, took part in a soil health rally in the Capitol rotunda on the first floor. These conservationalists are funded with the state's \$3.5 million, leveraged with the 9 million federal dollars for the overall conservation capacity building initiative. As a multi-generational farmer myself, hoping to be raising that next generation of family farm operators, soil and water conservation district is near and dear to my heart. The work that these 40 planners do must not go unnoticed. It is their critical work that ensures the protection of our land while continuing to provide food, fuel, and fiber for our families and the families that we represent. Please join me in giving the conservational park planners a warm Springfield welcome. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Hammond is recognized."

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Hammond: "During Women's History Month, it's my distinct honor to recognize an exceedingly accomplished woman who is making history right here in the State of Illinois. Illinois Supreme

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Court Justice Lisa Holder White. On July 7 of 2022, Lisa Holder White took office as the first black woman to sit on the Illinois Supreme Court. Justice Holder White is a Decatur native, who now resides in the Springfield area, and it's been my privilege to get to know her. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Lewis University with a bachelor in arts degree in political science. She went on to earn her juris doctor from the University of Illinois Law School. Justice Holder White began her career as an assistant state's attorney for Macon County before going into private practice with a Decatur law firm. While in private practice, she also served as an assistant public defender for Macon County, where she litigated on behalf of those charged with criminal offenses, represented abused children and neglected children. In 2001, she was sworn in as associate judge in the 6th Judicial District and the first black within that circuit. In 2008, she became a circuit judge, and in 2013, was sworn in as the first black justice on the Illinois Appellate Court 4th District. Justice Holder White is dedicated to judicial education. She has served on and chaired the Illinois Supreme Court committee that provides continuing legal education for our judges. She's also dedicated to giving back to the community and engaging with young people. She uses the courtroom to host mock trials with school children and provide students with the opportunity to learn about career opportunities, the legal profession, and what it is like to serve as a judge. Justice Lisa Holder White's remarkable rise and ascendance to the high court is a testament to her hard

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work and her unwavering commitment to the people of Illinois.

Thank you, Madam Chair."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Avelar is recognized."

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

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Avelar: "Thank you. 'Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity and worth of cultures and people.' These are words by Rigoberta Menchú. She's a trailblazing icon of the women's rights movement, and I'm eager to highlight this woman during our Women's History Month celebration this year, a woman who embodies the theme put forth by the National Women's History Alliance, women who advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Rigoberta is a human rights activist, feminist, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, but her most important work stems from her upbringing. Actually, I did not know this, but Rigoberta was actually born on Junary 9, I'm born on January 9 as well, but 1959, to a poor Indigenous peasant family in Guatemala. After witnessing her father's imprisonment, Rigoberta joined the Comité de Unidad Campesina, the Committee for the Peasant Union. Rigoberta advocated for better conditions for farmworkers along the Guatemalan Pacific Coast, where she was actively involved with large demonstrations in Guatemala's capital. Her strong presence made her a target, but that did not stop her from flee... from fleeing to Mexico, where she continued to break ground by becoming the organizer abroad of resistance to oppression in

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Guatemala and the struggle for Indian peasant people's rights. Her life story, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, written by Elisabeth Burgos, brought her worldwide attention and helped her to become a notable spokesperson for Indigenous people across the globe. In 1992, she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle to preserve social justice and ethnic cultural reconciliation, based on her respect for the rights of Indigenous people. She would go on to use the prize money to found the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation, an Indigenous advocacy organization. Through her tireless work and dedication, Rigoberta has brought attention to the plight of marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous communities, and has been a powerful voice for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Rigoberta's work is a pivotal example of transformative powers of activism and the enduring impact of one woman's commitment to social change. Thank you."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Representative Stava-Murray is recognized."

Stava-Murray: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Please proceed."

Stava-Murray: "I rise today to honor both tomorrow as International Women's Day as well as to honor the memory of one of the greatest 20th century American women, whose achievements built atop the foundation laid by the earliest pioneers of female equality. Ruth Bader Ginsburg served on the U.S. Supreme Court for over 27 years after being nominated by President Bill Clinton in 1993. That's actually a day I remember well, because for a solid year and a half afterwards,

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I told anyone who asked me what do you want to be when you grow up that I wanted to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court because of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her leadership on becoming... on being another woman in that time when there so few women there. So, getting to that point, obviously, required Ginsburg to overcome significant obstacles. Despite attending Cornell University, Harvard Law School, and Columbia Law School, where she was tied for first in her class, Ginsburg had trouble finding employment because of her gender. In 1954, while working for the Social Security Administration, Ginsburg was demoted for becoming pregnant. When she became 1 of only 9 women in a class of 500 at Harvard Law in 1956, the law school's dean invited the only... the female students to dinner at his home and asked them point blank, 'Why are you at Harvard Law School taking the place of a man?' In 1960, despite her sterling credentials and strong recommendations, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter rejected Ginsburg for a clerkship, openly citing her gender as the reason. Later that year, Ginsburg ultimately earned a two-year clerkship with a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. But only after a former professor at Columbia Law threatened to never recommend another Columbia graduate to the judge if he did not set aside his misogyny to take Ginsburg on. In 1963, Ginsburg became a professor at Rutgers Law School but was paid less than her male colleagues because, as she was told, 'Your husband has a very good job.' In 1970, Ginsburg cofounded the *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, the first law journal in the United States to... to focus exclusively on women's rights. In 1972, Ginsburg left

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Rutgers, where she'd earned tenure in 1969 to cofound the Women's Rights Project at the ACLU, becoming the project's general counsel the next year. The project participated in more than 300 gender discrimination cases by 1974. And Ginsburg personally argued six gender discrimination cases before the U.S. Supreme Court between 1973 and 1976, winning five of them. Ginsburg's body of legal work in the 1970s is credited by legal scholars with discouraging legislatures from treating women differently under law by directly enhancing protections under the equal protection clause. She continued working with the ACLU until 1980. That year, president Jimmy Carter nominated Ginsburg to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. When she was confirmed by the Senate, she became only the second woman to serve there. The first having been nominated only the year prior. In 1993, President Bill Clinton nominated Ginsburg as an Associate Justice to the U.S. Supreme Court. She served until her death in 2020, having an impact on issues such as gender discrimination, reproductive rights, property rights, international law, voting rights, economic equality, Native American rights, mental health care, and environmental justice. Justice Ginsburg's legacy is one to which women have been able to look for 70 years to find inspiration and a sterling example of tenacity, persistence, and resolve in the face of adversity. Today, I ask we all take a moment to reflect on her career and achievements and to take stock of what her courageous life meant to the cause of social justice and female equality. Thank you."

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Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Mr. Clerk, please read the Adjournment Resolution."

Clerk Hollman: "Senate Joint Resolution #51, offered by Representative Gabel.

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that when the Senate adjourns on Thursday, March 07, 2024, it stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 12, 2024, or to the call of the President; and when the House of Representatives adjourns on Thursday, March 07, 2024, it stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 12, 2024, or until the call of the Speaker."

Speaker Hernandez, B.: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of the Adjournment Resolution. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Adjournment Resolution is adopted. And now, allowing perfunctory time for the Clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the house stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 12. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."

Clerk Hollman: "House Perfunctory Session will come to order. Introduction and First Reading of House Bills. House Bill 5766, offered by Representative Croke, a Bill for an Act concerning education. House Bill 5767, offered by Representative Ammons, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 5768, offered by Representative Tarver, a Bill for an Act concerning elections. House Bill 5769, offered by Representative Guzzardi, a Bill for an Act

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concerning public aid. First Reading of these House Bills.
There being no further business, the House Perfunctory
Session will stand adjourned."