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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
FULL LEGISLATURE MEETING

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HOWARD J. KOPEL, PRESIDING OFFICER

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**County Executive and Legislative Building**  
**1550 Franklin Avenue**  
**Mineola, New York**

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Monday, August 5, 2024

1:31 p.m.

TAKEN BY: KAREN LORENZO, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

Presiding Officer

7th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR THOMAS MCKEVITT

Alternate Presiding Officer

13th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI, JR.

Alternate Deputy Presiding Officer

15th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SCOTT DAVIS

1st Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

2nd Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES

3rd Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR PATRICK MULLANEY

4th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SETH KASLOW

5th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

6th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR JOHN J. GIUFFRE

8th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SCOTT STRAUSS

9th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

10th Legislative District

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DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

Minority Leader

11th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR MICHAEL GIANGREGORIO

12th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR, III

14th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR ARNOLD W. DRUCKER

16th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE WALKER

17th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR SAMANTHA GOETZ

18th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

19th Legislative District

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MICHAEL PULITZER

Clerk of the Legislature

JAMES DARCY, ESQ.

Attorney for Clerk of the Legislature

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APPEARANCES:

Commissioner Patrick Ryder

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Josh Meyer, Esq.

West Group Law

John Wagner, Esq.

Certilman Balin adler & Hyman, LLP

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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Congressman Anthony D'Esposito
- Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick
- Senator Jack Martins
- Senator Steve Rhoads
- Town Supervisor Jen DeSena
- Michael LiPetri
- Mayor William Hall
- Chuck Cutolo
- Dan Khan
- Chris Schneider
- Eileen Muntz
- Jennifer Ungar
- Susan Kaye
- Samuel Fried
- Mary Flanagan
- Ari Ackerman
- Rebecca Sassouni
- Abigal Badalov
- Kathleen Downes
- Stephanie Shamol
- Vanessa Tanian

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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Michelle Aldoot
- Susan Gottlieb
- Melinda Tholer
- Philip Nolan
- Juie Lam
- EMily Mervosh
- Ronen Levy
- Angelique Corthias
- Claire Gunner
- Rebecca Goldaper
- Michal Richardson
- Jeremy Joseph
- David Wapner
- Daniel Norber
- Juliana Hedeman
- Susan Gottehrer
- Nicole Richards
- Gerry Friedlander
- Gerald R. Podlesat
- Yaffa Rabe
- Julie Sacks
- Sanford Rubenstein
- Kiaria Abbady

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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Alina Neganova
- Jenna Atwell
- D'Anna Morgan
- Evette Startz
- Russ Adgern
- Ngozi Alston
- Kira Bryant
- Bridgette Jones
- Harry Burger
- Alison Devin
- Miranda Stinson
- Elyssa Stein
- Hazel Newlevant
- Stacy Klien
- Maya Panton Aronoff
- Serita Sargent
- Andrea Bolander
- Scott Stark
- Meta Mereday
- Monica Kiely
- Pearl Jacobs
- Steve Rolston
- Lynn Krug



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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Karen Riordan
- Elizabeth Nabet
- Patty Harris
- Jeremy Joseph
- Barbara Kane
- Terry Coniglio
- Richard Catalano
- Chris Jacobs
- Ray Goger
- Carline Reimers
- Danyell Thillet
- Caprice Rines

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Let's please take your seats. We're going to start out, as always, with the Pledge of Allegiance. And the Pledge of Allegiance today will be led by Legislator Patrick Mullaney, who is also a former marine corporal and lieutenant in the New York City Fire Department.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Thank you, Presiding Officer. If everyone will please rise. Place your hand over your heart and join me.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance is said.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, everybody, welcome to the session of the County Legislature. I'm going to very briefly go over some of our procedures. We're going to start out every month with presentations of awards to our Top Cops, followed by some points of personal privilege. That, in turn, will be followed by one hour of public comment.

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One hour public comment where people can talk about whatever you want, limited to three minutes, except that we have some elected officials here today, and, we waive some rules for them. But generally speaking, we ask you all to limit your comments to three minutes and we time it. And we mean it because the comment period will be limited to one hour. After that--

(Whereupon, interruption  
from audience.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: If you let me finish, you'll hear the rest.

After that we go into our session part. As part of the session we're going to have hearings on the casino bill, what we call the casino bill, and for the mask bill. During that hearing, any one of you who wants to be heard will be heard. The same three minutes will apply. So nobody will be cut off. Everybody will get a chance.

Now, if there's anyone who needs to speak about something other than those

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matters that we're considering in the hearing, they will be heard as well at the end. But we're going to once again start off with the public comment.

Now Top Cops. So we start off with, the PBA honoring, well, why don't you come up and tell us.

MR. KALENDER: Good afternoon, Kris Kalender with CSEA. Presiding Officer, I'd like to say that's a very good way to segue into our presentation today, because today is the absolute definition of what teamwork amongst different groups, different units, do to provide the top notch service that these residents in Nassau County deserve.

So I'd like to start by introducing you to everybody. Our Nassau County Communications Bureau operator, Sandra Jimenez. She received a call for a 65 year old male who was complaining of chest pains after walking his dog. She immediately brought the call down to communications operators Patricia Collins

1  
2 and Gail Jameson, who coordinated and  
3 dispatched the response. They dispatched  
4 police medic Ben Celestin, Evan  
5 Schatzberg, police medic coordinator  
6 Scott DiPino, along with police officers  
7 Andrew Viscusi, Michael O'Connell, Joe  
8 Petrizio and Brett Maibach, who all  
9 responded as soon as they got the call.

10 When they arrived, the police  
11 officers, they noticed that his lips were  
12 blue and that he didn't look well. They  
13 gave the medics a step it up to make them  
14 respond a little bit faster and  
15 responsible. While they placed him on  
16 oxygen, he became unresponsive and went  
17 into cardiac arrest. They immediately  
18 defibrillated him, which caused him to  
19 regain consciousness again.

20 Police Medic Celestin, after  
21 shocking him, began working on him along  
22 with Police Medic Schatzberg. While they  
23 were obtaining their EKG, yet again, his  
24 heart stopped. The medics did shock him  
25 again, and again, he woke back up. They

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established an IV. They continue to work on him by delivering oxygen for him. Once again, for the third time he again went unconscious. They hooked up a CPR machine and they shocked him again. This continued for quite a while.

They set up medications as far as helping his heart to get his heart restarted. And they did everything that we're taught to do in a proficient, expedited manner.

Ultimately, since everyone up here knows how we roll, we weren't going to stop. We brought them up to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, he woke up. He tried to take the tube off, the IVs off. We helped him out. We got him to the hospital. And now, because of the quick actions of our 911 operators, our police medics, our police officers, today I introduce you to Mr. Reggie Iverdi (phonetic).

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. SHANAHAN: Good afternoon. James

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Shanahan, financial secretary of the PBA. So not to go through the entire dynamics of what went on, but to point out what Kris said about the teamwork, it's important for all of us to know that it's just not the police in the street. We have the best CB operators in the country, best medics in the country, and of course, hands down the best cops in the country. So yeah, how about a round of applause, everybody?

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. SHANAHAN: Sounds like a heated room, so maybe I might do a few jokes to calm everyone down right now.

In all seriousness, it's amazing to have this gentleman standing next to us. Reggie is a AV pro, so if anybody here wants to book a party, Cloud Nine productions; top notch.

But more importantly, let me recognize my officers. Kris basically told everyone what they did, but, officer Brett Maibach, Michael O'Connell, first

1  
2 on scene. He did notice Reggie not  
3 looking well. His lips were blue. They  
4 put him on oxygen, rushed the ambulance.  
5 Officers, Andrew Viscusi and Joseph  
6 Petrizzo, were next on scene. And as Kris  
7 said, it was complete teamwork. Amazing  
8 thing to save this gentleman's life.

9 So God bless you and God bless the  
10 Nassau County Police Department from top  
11 to bottom.

12 COMMISSIONER RYDER: I'm going to be  
13 real short and just say thank you. Thank  
14 you. Because you heard defibrillators,  
15 you heard oxygen, you heard well trained  
16 police officers, well trained  
17 communications operators, phenomenal  
18 medics that get there. This is all  
19 because of what we get from this  
20 Legislative Body. Whenever we come  
21 forward with the request. The best  
22 trained cops, the best trained medics and  
23 the best trained CB operators in this  
24 case are always out there doing the job.

25 We've got a brand new facility that



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we train in. We got a brand new training village that were going to take training to the next level, which is not seen anywhere in this country, but it's about the service that we give back to our community. And that's what they did that day to keep this man alive. So again, we thank you for what you do for us and thank them for the great job that they do consistently day in and day out.

MEDIC DIPINO: Police Medic Coordinator Scott DiPino, I just wanted to personally thank this body and also Commissioner Ryder and his executive staff. A couple of years ago, I was up here and I tried to push with you guys to get the CPR machines out in the field to the ambulances and this Body, unanimously, with our great police commissioner and executive staff put them on every truck that we have. The amount of lives that they've saved, including this gentleman, they're probably in the hundreds at this point. So I can't thank

1  
2 you guys enough for always having our  
3 backs. And obviously the Commissioner is  
4 a huge fan, so thank you very much.

5 OFFICER MAIBACH: So would you have.  
6 I'll be brief. Say thank you to you guys  
7 for the award and Nassau County  
8 Legislature. Thank you to the  
9 Commissioner for the nice words. Thank  
10 you, the PBA. It's an honor to be here.  
11 On behalf of all of us, it's an honor to  
12 accept this award.

13 Just like to say a few things about  
14 the guys on scene. Scott, Evan, Ben, It's  
15 a privilege to work with you guys. I  
16 truly believe that if we were in any  
17 trouble, we know you guys would have our  
18 back, and it's a privilege. It's a true  
19 honor. Joe Petrizzo, you're the most  
20 calm, cool, and collected guy I know.  
21 Keep everything, professional and you  
22 always keep us grounded. Drew, I think if  
23 there's any cop you can ask anyone in the  
24 department in the entire county, who  
25 would you want on a big call? I think

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Drew V, unanimously would be number one.  
And, Mike, I think your attention to  
detail, second to none. I truly think  
that if you weren't on scene for that  
call, that Reggie wouldn't be here today.  
Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr.  
Iverdi, would you care to say a few  
words? You don't have to.

MR. IVERDI: Okay. I'm not good of  
public speaking. The only thing I'm  
going to say. I'm so grateful for these  
guys, they saved my life. Thank you so  
much.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr. Verdi.  
That was a perfect speech.

Legislator Goetz.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Mr. Iverdi, a  
short speech is the best speech in this  
line of business.

But on a serious note, I want to say  
thank you to each and every one of you.  
The first thing that stood out to me is  
what everyone here acknowledged was

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teamwork. You each have a different role and altogether you are able to save this man's life. Public service comes in different forms, and often things like our Operators Bureau and Medics are unrecognized heroes. And we are just so grateful that you're all being recognized for the hard work that you do every single day, and the results that it leads to our community.

We have Mr. Iverdi here today thanks to all of your hard work, and we cannot be more grateful. So on behalf of the entire community, thank you for everything that you guys do day in and. Day out, because we cannot do it without you. You are the very best trained. And thank you very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Walker.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: I too just want to thank each and every one of you who played a part in this. And I cannot thank you enough for what you do day in and day

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out. But I know the most important person that wants to thank you and is so thankful for each and every one of you, is Reggie. Reggie lives in Hicksville, just like I do. He's one of my wonderful constituents and was very close to school over there at Burns Avenue. And, he would not be here today if it wasn't for each and every one of you. So thank you, all. God bless and stay safe. And, Reggie. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. I'll invite you all up for a quick. Photo, and then we'll move on.

(Whereupon, citation and photos.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank.

Okay, now we have. Two points of personal privilege. We'll start off with Legislator Giuffre.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Thank you, Presiding Officer. So I'm sure many of you know about the dog that was abandoned on the Southern State Parkway. What you may not know is that one of my constituents rescued that dog. And so we are here to acknowledge him and honor him, for his act of kindness.

Today, we gather to honor a truly remarkable individual whose actions exemplify the very best of humanity. Ray Quinonez. Ray, where are you? Come on up Stand near the microphone.

(Whereupon, Mr. Quinonez steps up to podium.)

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: All right. Ray Quinonez, a dedicated employee of the Village of Garden City, shows us what it means to step up with compassion and courage in time of need. As he was on his

1  
2 way to work early one morning last month,  
3 he encountered a scene that no one should  
4 ever have to witness. An English Mastiff  
5 named -- You know the name? Roxy -- left  
6 tied to a light pole on the Southern  
7 State Parkway. Poor dog was bound to a  
8 leash so short she could only stand or  
9 sit And beside her a bowl of food and a  
10 note. Her yelps for help were a desperate  
11 call for rescue, and without any  
12 hesitation, driving on the Southern State  
13 Parkway, Ray pulled over and sprang into  
14 action. He contacted the police, and he  
15 made sure that Roxy received the help she  
16 needed. His swift response and kind heart  
17 led to Roxy being transported to the Town  
18 of Hempstead Animal Shelter, being  
19 examined by a veterinarian, and  
20 ultimately being adopted by a wonderful  
21 family from Aquebogue. So, Ray, God bless  
22 you.

23 Just this past Thursday, the New  
24 York State Police arrested the man that  
25 is alleged to have abandoned Roxy. We

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have animal shelters all over the place in Nassau County. There's no reason to do that. Somebody has an animal that they can't care for. Please bring them to your local shelter. Do not abandon them to a death sentence.

So, Ray. You are, in three years, my first point of personal privilege. And it's an honor to be here. And would you like to say a few words?

MR. QUINONEZ: I just want to thank you so very much for this recognition. I greatly appreciate it. I'm just glad I was there for an innocent animal. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next we have Legislator Solages has a point of privilege.

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LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to bring forward one of my constituents when my youngest constituents, Mr. Devan DeFreitas, can you please come to the podium? Give this man a round of applause. You may have seen him before. This two year old, he recently performed on America's Got Talent and his remarkable performance was an inspiration for our whole world to see. I'm so proud that he is my constituent. And of course, a lot of credit goes to his father and his mother. His father is here. Please state your name, sir.

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MR. DEFREITAS: Dwayne DeFreitas.

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LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you so much for being here. We have a very busy agenda here today, but time is always important. And I wanted to take the time

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to thank you and to congratulate you for raising such a fine young man. Give this young man a round of applause.

(Whereupon, applause.)

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: I would have liked for this audience to see his performance on America's Got Talent, but I'm sure you could look up his name and Google and see what a wonderful performance. And perhaps he may not comprehend this proclamation that he's going to receive. Perhaps in a couple of years you could share with him and let him know that his entire community is very proud of him. And we're very proud of his family. And we must do everything we can to support our young people because they are our future. And with him as our future. Our future is very bright.

I have to ask. Is there any song he could sing right now? Even Mary had a little lamb.

MR. DEFREITAS: Anything you want to sing? You are my sunshine.

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(Whereupon, sings "You are  
my sunshine".)

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you very  
much. I think that's what we all needed  
to hear today. Your son is a bright ray  
of sunshine that we all need. And I'm  
going to ask you to please continue to  
nurture him and know that his entire  
community is here to support him.

MR. DEFREITAS: Thank you very much  
and congratulations. I appreciate it.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Please check  
out the footage on America's Got Talent.  
You did a wonderful job.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, now we go into a period of public comment and it's going to be hard to follow that act.

We're privileged to have with us today a number of elected public officials. And we're going to start off with our one hour of public comment that's going to terminate at 3:00, we're, as I said, going to start off with some public officials.

We have with us this afternoon, Congressman Anthony D'Esposito, who I will mention is a former New York City police detective and also my congressman.

CONGRESSMAN D'ESPOSITO: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. Unfortunately, unlike the adorable young man that was up before me, I cannot sing. But I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here this afternoon to talk a few moments about the Mask Transparency Act.

From October 7th and obviously before then, not only this country, but our state and this county has seen a

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startling rise in anti-Israel,  
anti-America and hate-filled protests. We  
have seen these protests firsthand. Not  
only here in Nassau County, but in New  
York City, in our nation's capital, most  
recently, burning of American flags at  
Union Station, and of course, the  
absolute atrocities that have happened at  
educational institutions throughout this  
country.

You see, these protesters are bad  
actors who have burned the American flag  
while proudly brandishing Hamas and  
Hezbollah banners, all while concealing  
their identity with masks. It is vital  
that these protesters remove the masks,  
come out of the darkness and are shown in  
light, which I believe will deter them --

(Whereupon, applause.)

CONGRESSMAN D'ESPOSITO: You see, Mr.  
Presiding Officer, this bill is aimed at  
bad actors and does not apply for  
religious or cultural purposes, or for  
those suffering from health ailments. The

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bill applies to gatherings of people,  
"protesting in public spaces, protesters  
whose sole intent is to promote hate  
speech, violence, intimidation and  
harassment". This bill is about stopping  
people who intend to do harm. They don't  
intend to do harm to just Republicans or  
just Democrats, but they intend to do  
harm to American people. It's not for the  
elderly. It's not for the sick. It's  
about violent thugs. This is about  
accountability. We all stand for free  
speech. We do not stand for hate speech.

(Whereupon, applause.)

CONGRESSMAN D'ESPOSITO: And  
perhaps, perhaps some in this room are  
not concerned about law and order, but  
many of us should be, because it is a  
threat to our democracy. And what we've  
seen here in places like New York and  
across the country, but specifically in  
places like New York, those rise in  
anti-Israel and pro hate attacks. Not  
only has the reporting gone up, but our

1  
2 law enforcement professionals will tell  
3 you that there are many hate acts and  
4 violent anti-Semitism that goes  
5 unreported because of the failed policies  
6 that Democrats have instituted in New  
7 York State with cashless bail And  
8 criminal justice reform.

9 (Whereupon, applause.)

10 CONGRESSMAN D'ESPOSITO: Presiding  
11 Officer, I have spoken to colleagues on  
12 the floor of the House who represent  
13 states throughout this great country, and  
14 there has been legislation just like  
15 this, successful in places like Florida,  
16 Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, North  
17 Carolina and Virginia.

18 And lastly, I will say I want to  
19 thank Legislator Pilip for her  
20 leadership. And I will say to all of you  
21 that are going to be hearing from many  
22 today and eventually voting on this  
23 legislation. It will be enforced by one  
24 of the finest police departments in the  
25 country.

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(Whereupon, applause.)

CONGRESSMAN D'ESPOSITO: So when you're casting your vote today. You're either casting your vote in favor of hateful thugs who want to cause harassment and intimidation; you're either voting in favor of something that will actually keep our community safe; or you're not only going to turn your back on the people of Nassau County, but you're going to question the trustworthiness of the men and women of law enforcement who will be enforcing it.

Mr. Presiding Officer, thank you for the time, and I yield back.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you, Congressman D'Esposito.

Next, we have New York State Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick.

SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. It is an honor for me to represent the five towns in the Ninth Senate District.



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2           It is incumbent upon all of us to  
3 speak out in favor and in support of the  
4 Mask Transparency Act that has been  
5 introduced by Legislator Mazi Pilip.

6           (Whereupon, applause.)

7           SENATOR CANZONERI-FITPATRICK: It is  
8 important that we be clear about what  
9 this is and what this isn't. What this  
10 is, is legislation to prevent masks and  
11 facial coverings to be used to conceal a  
12 person's identity because they know that  
13 their acts are either violent, harassing,  
14 intimidating, or being warned to commit a  
15 crime. This does not apply to individuals  
16 wearing a mask to protect their health,  
17 and it does not apply to people wearing a  
18 mask for religious or cultural purposes,  
19 or for the peaceful celebration of their  
20 holidays. This applies to gatherings of  
21 people to protest in public spaces, and  
22 we know what that means. Let's be clear.  
23 It means protests whose sole intent is to  
24 promote hate speech, violence,  
25 intimidation, and harassment.

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We have seen the protests with Hamas flags, with terrorist headbands, terror organization pictures, the Final Solution posters and more. These protests have been violent and promote violence and call for the death and the slaughter of people. These are facts; this is not my opinion. This is about intent to do harm, so let's not play games. As was just stated, this is to protect all of us, not just our Jewish friends and neighbors. This is to protect everyone who wants to be out there.

My friend and colleague, Senator Steve Rhoads, has sponsored legislation at the state level, and I am a proud co-sponsor of that legislation.

(Whereupon, applause.)

SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: That Legislation will do similar to this mask bill, but unfortunately, due to one party control in Albany, it's likely that that bill will never come up for a vote. As a proud member of the Anti-Semitism Task

1  
2 Force that was started by my other  
3 colleague, Senator Jack Martins, long  
4 before the October 7th attacks, I feel it  
5 necessary to speak out on this very  
6 important bill and make sure that every  
7 member of this Legislature understands  
8 that it's in your power to do what is  
9 right and to protect the residents of  
10 Nassau County.

11 I, too, have faith in the Nassau  
12 County Police that they will enforce this  
13 bill in a very judicial manner and in a  
14 way to protect our residents. We have to  
15 trust our police and support them because  
16 they are putting themselves on the line  
17 to protect us.

18 (Whereupon, applause.)

19 SENATOR CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK: Some  
20 people want to say that this is about  
21 free speech, but it's not. As we all  
22 learned, anybody that's gone to law  
23 school, we know that you cannot scream  
24 fire in a crowded movie theater. That is  
25 not protected speech. And I submit to

1  
2 this board that this is what this is  
3 similar to. We cannot allow hateful  
4 speech to continue. And, therefore, I  
5 respectfully request that every  
6 legislator support this important bill.

7 And I thank you again, Mazi Pilip,  
8 for introducing this important  
9 legislation. Thank you for the  
10 opportunity.

11 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
12 Next we have Senator Jack Martins.

13 SENATOR MARTINS: Good afternoon,  
14 Mr. Presiding Officer, dear colleagues of  
15 our County Legislature, it's a privilege  
16 to be here with you, and I thank you for  
17 the opportunity to speak on a couple of  
18 issues.

19 One, I want to comment on our Nassau  
20 County Police Department, the wonderful  
21 job they do, and the fact that our crime  
22 rate here in Nassau County is what it is.  
23 You know, we had somebody from Western  
24 New York who spends a lot of time in  
25 Albany, our governor, come down to Nassau

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2 County just a few weeks ago and comment  
3 about how crime is down. But that  
4 statistic has nothing to do with what's  
5 happening in Albany, has nothing to do  
6 with those so-called Bail Reform issues,  
7 Raise the Age, Clean Slate, or any other  
8 initiative that has made law  
9 enforcement's job harder each and every  
10 day. It's because of you, the members of  
11 this Legislature, our County Executive,  
12 the resources they give our Police  
13 Department and our Commissioner and his  
14 leadership that our crime rate in Nassau  
15 County is lower than it is a year ago  
16 today. Through your efforts, not because  
17 of what's done in Albany, and I salute  
18 each and every one of you for your effort  
19 in supporting our Police Department and  
20 keeping our residents safe. That's what  
21 this is about.

22 (Whereupon, applause.)

23 SENATOR MARTINS: So when we talk  
24 about the Mask Transparency Act, let's  
25 remember you can't take your license

1  
2 plate off your car and drive around. That  
3 license plate is there so you can be  
4 identified if you break the law. You  
5 can't drive around with your windows  
6 tinted to a point where you can't see  
7 inside, because you have to be able to  
8 observe those people who are driving in  
9 case someone breaks the law, that they  
10 can be held accountable.

11 This is about accountability. Make  
12 no mistake about it. This is about  
13 accountability and our ability to enforce  
14 the laws and our responsibility as  
15 policymakers to those residents that we  
16 have sworn to protect and to serve. Each  
17 and every one of us.

18 So this is nothing -- and please,  
19 let's try and not make this about  
20 politics. I will tell you this in Albany,  
21 as my colleague Senator  
22 Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick said, there's a  
23 bill. It has been there. It was  
24 introduced. It didn't move. It wouldn't  
25 be the first time that Nassau County is

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the tip of the spear in sending common sense in New York State and serves as an example for best practices. This is best practices. And we have the opportunity, Mr. Presiding Officer, and each and every one of you, to send that message loud and clear. We are going to keep people safe. We're going to prioritize the safety of our residents, whoever they may be, from wherever they may come. We're going to respect cultural differences, and we are going to do so in a way that prioritizes safety once and for all.

I urge you to support this bill. I hope, I hope, as I stand here that it's unanimous. I truly do, because I think that the residents of our great county deserve nothing less. Thank you very.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next we have the State Senator Steve Rhoads, by the way, our former colleague.

SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. And it's good to be back. And I promise I'm not going to come

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on that side of the dais, I promise.

It is a tremendous honor to be here, one, to first of all, say thank you to each and every one of you. You know, you look at some of the policies that have come out of Albany: Cashless Bail, Criminal Justice Reform, Raise the Age Clean Slate Quality Act, and it seems as though with the Majority in the State Senate, State Assembly and with the Governor that we have that common sense is under attack in Albany. And I come here to thank each and every one of you as we talk about the Mask Transparency Act, to be, as Senator Martins said, the tip of the spear in bringing common sense back to New York State. Restoring confidence --

(Whereupon, applause.)

SENATOR RHOADS: Restoring confidence of the people in Nassau County, in their elected officials, and standing for public protection and what is right, as you have done during the



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time that I served here in creating the Office of Crime Victim Advocate, in fighting back the Defund the Police Movement, to ensure that we continue to have the amazing Nassau County Police Department that we have under the leadership of Pat Ryder, who continue to keep our people safe. This is just the latest example of Nassau County leading the way.

Because I'll tell you, up in Albany, they're not listening. Back in May, May 3rd, as a matter of fact, I joined my Assembly colleague, Mike Rielly from Staten Island, in restoring a law that was on the books in New York State for 175 years. That is New York's Mask Mandate, which during Covid, not only did the Governor try to suspend that bill, but the New York State Legislature, under one party rule in Albany actually repealed it. And we are seeing the effects today. We are seeing the effects play out on college campuses. We are

1  
2 seeing the effects play out in our  
3 communities. And that is not an attack on  
4 free speech. We want free speech to be  
5 preserved. This is not an attempt to  
6 quell public protests, but this is an  
7 attempt to ensure that peaceful protest  
8 remains peaceful. And we saw the opposite  
9 play out on campuses right here in the  
10 state of New York, all across our state;  
11 most notably at Columbia University.

12 The events of October 7th were  
13 horrific, just as horrific for what we  
14 saw play out on those campuses. Just as  
15 horrific was the fact that nothing was  
16 done to stop it. For those of us who have  
17 attended Holocaust memorials, for those  
18 of us who have stood in solidarity to say  
19 never again; never again is now. It is  
20 time for us to take a stand against hate.

21 (Whereupon, applause.)

22 SENATOR RHOADS: That is a stand  
23 that I would encourage the state  
24 Assembly, the State Senate and our  
25 Governor who called for on June 13th, who

1  
2 called for legislation to be passed to  
3 the state level, and yet has done nothing  
4 to bring the State Assembly and State  
5 Senate back into session to pass  
6 legislation that we introduced back in  
7 May that would put this law back on the  
8 books.

9 The bill that was introduced --

10 (Whereupon, interruption  
11 from the public.)

12 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: If  
13 somebody here is going to be disrupting  
14 the proceedings, we're going to ask one  
15 of the nice officers in the back to help  
16 escort you out. Please, we need some  
17 decorum over here. Have some respect for  
18 the senator. Let him finish.

19 SENATOR RHOADS: Thank you, Presiding  
20 Officer, I appreciate it.

21 The bill was introduced by  
22 Legislator Pilip is very similar to what  
23 New York state law was up until a few  
24 years ago. That bill that law that  
25 existed for 175 years was passed in 1845.

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It was passed to fight the anti rent riots that were taking place by farmers who were disguising their identity and attacking police officers. That same legislation 100 years ago was used to quell people in hoods from terrorizing our African American community. That legislation, if it were still law, could have been used to quell, for example, what we saw on college campuses where peaceful protests turned into violence. It could have been used to stop what we saw at Hofstra University, not more than a few miles away from this chamber where six masked individuals actually shot two people attending a graduation ceremony.

This needs to stop. And I want to thank you, Legislator, Mazi Pilip, the members of the County Legislature's Majority who have co-sponsored this bill today. And I would encourage each of you to continue to be leaders and unanimously pass this legislation in support of common sense, in support of public

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safety, and to send a message to Albany that here in Nassau County, common sense and public safety continues to reign. They need to do their jobs up there and follow suit.

Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next we have Mayor William Hall.

MAYOR HALL: Good afternoon. I stand before you today to voice my strong opposition to the proposed Mask Transparency Act.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MAYOR HALL: While I understand the intention behind this legislation, it is to enhance public safety, I firmly believe that the unintended consequences far outweigh any potential benefits. This act has the potential to disproportionately impact our black and brown communities, and could lead to increased racial profiling.

My name is Wayne J. Hall, Sr.,

1  
2 former mayor of the Incorporated Village  
3 of Hempstead, and I am 77 years old, and  
4 I am a black man who served as a combat  
5 medic with the Company D, the 45th  
6 Medical Battalion, Third Armored Division  
7 from 1964 to 1966.

8 (Whereupon, applause.)

9 MAYOR HALL: Having faced numerous  
10 challenges in my life, including a kidney  
11 transplant, I am deeply concerned about  
12 the implications of the Mask Transparency  
13 Act. This legislation not only threatens  
14 to infringe on the rights of our  
15 communities, but also introduces a  
16 potential for harm that could worsen  
17 existing inequalities.

18 It is vital that we prioritize our  
19 policies that force the inclusivity and  
20 understanding, rather than those that  
21 promote division and distrust.

22 Historically, laws targeting  
23 concealment of identities, such as those  
24 enacted against the KKK were intended to  
25 address specific threats. However, our

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current context is vastly different. Implementing a law like this Mask Transparency Act today, risks becoming a tool for racial profiling. Black and brown individuals who already face this disproportionate scrutiny from law enforcement will be more likely to be stopped and questioned simply for wearing masks. This is not a hypothetical concern. It is reality that is backed by data. Studies have shown that similar policies in our jurisdiction have led to increase in racial bias stops, and we cannot afford to repeat these mistakes in Nassau County.

Another critical issue is the matter of health. As I explained to you before, I'm a kidney transplant recipient and I'm on a rejection medication, which makes me immunosuppressed. Covid 19 is still a significant threat, and mask wearing remains a necessary precaution in many situations. Individuals and health conditions that make them more vulnerable

1  
2 to respiratory illness rely on masks for  
3 their safety. How can we ask those  
4 individuals to prove they need to wear  
5 masks every time they're stopped? This is  
6 an unreasonable and intrusive expectation  
7 because there's a HIPAA Act.

8 Furthermore, the act does not  
9 clearly define what constitutes a face  
10 mask. In colder months, ski masks are  
11 commonly worn for worn for warmth. Should  
12 we penalize individuals for protecting  
13 themselves from the cold?

14 We must also consider the broader  
15 implications for public safety and  
16 community trust. If residents feel that  
17 they are more likely to be stopped and  
18 questioned without cause, it will erode  
19 trust in the law enforcement and civic  
20 institutions. This trust is crucial for  
21 maintaining public safety and community  
22 cohesion. We cannot ignore the potential  
23 for the act to morph into stop and frisk  
24 situations. Individuals, especially  
25 those from marginalized communities, are



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subjected to invasive and unwarranted stops. This is not the direction we should be.

While the goal of enhancing public safety is commendable. The Mask Transparency Act is not the solution. It just poses too many risks of racial profiling, health privacy violations, and the loss of community trust. So I am against it.

(Whereupon, applause.)

(Whereupon, public interruption.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Now we have --

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Can you please ask people to respect some of the elected officials and speakers here, please? That was a personal attack upon elected official.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Solages, you're correct and I would ask everybody to respect everyone here who is speaking, regardless of whether they

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agree with you or oppose you. Everyone's going to have a right to speak.

Former Assemblyman Michael LiPetri.

MR. LIPETRI: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Thank you to the Nassau County Legislature and the Republican Majority for spearheading this effort. Thank you, Legislator Pilip, for spearheading this Mask Transparency Act. It is crucial that I ask each and every one of you to vote in favor of this act.

Simply put, this bill exposes those who wish to espouse hate. This law provides exemptions which are in place for those who have health, religious or cultural excuse. However, however, cowards and those who wish to perpetuate hatred for Jews or commit crimes against our communities will be exposed from this bill.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. LIPETRI: They no longer can hide in the shadows, for this bill will be the light. Those who wish to keep

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their faces masked, seek to enjoy committing crimes with impunity. I saw it firsthand when I was at Columbia University a few months ago, supporting Israel and deterring hatred against the Jewish community. Bad actors who are concealing their identities empowered by New York State's bail reform laws, which made them feel strong that they could hide. This will not stand. This may be permitted in New York City, but not here in Nassau County. Not here in our home. That is about keeping our homes, our families, our children safe. Hate has no home in Nassau County. Hate has no home on Long Island. And surely hate has no home in the United States of America.

Republicans, Democrats, Independents, we must unite. We must repudiate hatred against Jews. We must stop enabling criminal behaviors. We must protect our communities. We must keep Nassau County safe. Law and order must prevail, and with this bill, it shall

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prevail.

Today we gather to restore common sense no matter what ideology you are, no matter what skin color you are, no matter what sexual orientation or sex you are. No matter what, this is about making sure our homes, our families, our children are indeed safe.

God bless you and thank you, everybody.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

Chuck Cutolo.

Mr. Pulitzer, I think we're done with the elected officials so we can start timing the three minute clocks.

MR. CUTOLO: My name is Chuck Cutolo. My address is 278 Asbury Avenue in Westbury. From 1996 through 1999, I was the Minority counsel for the Democrats on this Legislature, and from 2000 through 2001, I was the Majority counsel.

I'm here today to comment on the proposed local law relating to the

1  
2 wearing of mask or other facial coverings  
3 in a public place. Specifically, I would  
4 like to briefly focus on two phrases that  
5 appear in section three of this  
6 legislation. The first phrase is: "With  
7 the intent to conceal the identity of the  
8 wearer". The second phrase is: "Worn to  
9 protect the health and safety of the  
10 wearer or for religious or cultural  
11 purposes". Nowhere in this legislation is  
12 the police officer who has the  
13 responsibility for enforcing this law  
14 given guidance on how to deal with the  
15 very practical situations related to  
16 these two phrases that will arise and  
17 enforcing it. So then what kind of on the  
18 spot interrogation would be possible or  
19 appropriate by the police officer to  
20 determine the requisite intent?

21 Similarly, on what basis with a  
22 police officer be permitted to dispute a  
23 claim for one of the exemptions to this  
24 prohibition. It isn't fair to put the  
25 police officer in the position of making

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this determination without legislative guidance. Isn't the police officer being set up to either make an arbitrary or questionable determination, or to just ignore the law and thereby be accused of some kind of dereliction of duty?

I also noticed that the copy of the Legislation initially submitted, of course, that under Section 1, short title, there is a blank after the phrase "this law shall be known as the -- ". I suggest filling in the blank with these words: Unfair to Police Officers Act of 2024.

Let me conclude by saying this: I was among those who walked into the chamber along with the newly sworn in members on the very first day of this Legislature in 1996. I still remember the aspirations for the Legislature on that day. And it's within that context I ask that on this day, prior to being voted on by this Legislature, that a motion to table be made so that a crack in the

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doorway can be left open for even more thoughtful deliberation, and so that common sense (buzzer).

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr. Cutolo, three minutes. Everyone. Three minutes.

MR. CUTOLO: Yes, common sense has at least one last chance to peer into that crack, enter it and walk through it.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

We have one more elected official. I did not see you. Sorry. We have Supervisor of the Town of North Hempstead, Jen DeSena.

SUPERVISOR DESENA: Good afternoon, Presiding officer, members of the Legislature. I want to thank county legislator Mazi Pilip for standing strong and brave and protecting our families.

I'm the North Hempstead town supervisor, and our residents are afraid. Their children are afraid. They're on college campuses, they're seeing hateful language, hateful signs, they're seeing

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violence; but nothing is being done. We have people arrested and released because there's no evidence, nothing to know their identity.

So this is about fairness. Why should our children have to face masked people harassing them, saying hateful things, becoming violent?

(Whereupon, applause.)

SUPERVISOR DESENA: That's not fair to our children, to any of us. This bill is not about people wearing a mask for their health. This is not about people wearing a mask for a cultural or religious ceremony. This is for people who are engaged in hate, harassment, violence, and sometimes crime, and that cannot stand. It's not safe for our residents. It's not safe for our families.

I'm very glad that you're considering this today. I hope this will be a bipartisan, unanimous bill, because this is about protecting our families,



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our children, all of us from hate,  
violence, harassment and possibly crime.  
Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Abraham  
Hamara.

MR. HAMARA: Thank you. Thank you  
to the legislative chambers, the  
honorable president. My name is Abraham  
Hamara and we stand here to emphatically  
support Mazi Pilip's Mask Transparency  
Act.

I'm an attorney, but I'm also a  
Jewish rights activist. You see, I went  
to law school, and I find the law school.  
I was asked the question, why do I want  
to become an attorney? And in that  
question, the way I responded was drawing  
back on my experiences as a Jew born in  
Damascus. And that's not Damascus,  
Poland, it is Damascus, Syria. I was  
displaced along with 850,000 to 1 million  
Jewish refugees from our countries. Three  
hundred billion dollars of our assets

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2 were completely taken away from us. We  
3 came to the United States to seek refuge,  
4 and we did. We didn't cry. I didn't ask  
5 for any help. My father told me it is up  
6 to me to work. I went to school and I  
7 worked my -- off to come to where I am  
8 today.

9 You see, unfortunately, the same  
10 type of anti-Semitism, the same type of  
11 anti-Zionist anti-Semitism that led to my  
12 ethnic cleansing, that led to the ethnic  
13 cleansing of my people, has followed us  
14 to the place in which we sought refuge.  
15 It has followed us to the United States.

16 (Whereupon, applause.)

17 MR. HAMAR: When I say never again,  
18 it's personal and mean something to me.  
19 Never again will I displace my family to  
20 seek refuge in another place. But today I  
21 ask myself this question: How can I send  
22 my children to college? How can I send my  
23 children who want to represent themselves  
24 as proud Jews onto the streets to stand  
25 up with a Magen David. Why should I

1  
2 remain in this country? How could it seek  
3 refuge when it's allowing these type of  
4 protests covered as social justice  
5 protests? There is nothing social justice  
6 about these protests. You see these  
7 individuals, these individuals put on  
8 masks to cover their face, not because of  
9 Covid. The encampments on college  
10 campuses, there was no six feet, people  
11 didn't wear masks. There was no station  
12 to wash your hands. Health concerns  
13 weren't the reason. Now there is an  
14 exemption to health concerns on this bill  
15 there. This bill is 100% constitutional.  
16 These people cannot remain to be masked  
17 up while terrorizing our lives here in  
18 the United States again.

19 (Whereupon, applause.)

20 MR. HAMAR: I will end with this:  
21 Justice Brennan in the Supreme Court case  
22 clarified the clear and present dangers.  
23 And the test we use today is the Imminent  
24 Lawlessness Action. The Constitution  
25 guarantees free speech, and free press,

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does not permit the State to prohibit or prescribe our advocacy or use of force of law, except when the advocacy is directed to incite or producing imminent lawless action, and is likely to incite/produce action and define a revolution. Abu Bedoya Habib of Tel Aviv, which means Abu Beda, our beloved strike, strike Tel Aviv. They are chanting genocidal slogans covering their faces and masks. We face Arab supremacy in Syria. We refuse to face this adaptation of white supremacy. Just like the KKK covered their face. These Arabs on premises are now covering their face.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Dan Khan.

MR. KHAN: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Dan Khan. I'm a disabled U.S. Army veteran. I served on active duty for a number of years.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. KHAN: Thank you. I currently serve as the deputy director for a Muslim

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nonprofit, the Muslim American Leadership Alliance. And when this bill came across my desk and I was asked to review it, I was like, hey, nothing about this is Islamophobic. Nothing about this promotes any type of agenda. This is to keep our community safe. This is to keep people accountable. I want protesters who are pro-Palestine to be safe because among them, people are hijacking and using them for an agenda to promote violence and bigotry and hatred. And that's everything that we're against. That's everything Americans are against. And I know that when you vote yes, you're going to be keeping my family safe. You're going to be keeping me safe. You're going to be keeping my kids safe. I'm going to be able to walk down the street, go to the mall, whatever I do in Mineola and Long Island, I'm going to be safe. I'm going to be protected. And if people do come and attack, they're going to be held accountable as they should be.

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And I think any reasonable person, knows that if you're immunocompromised, you should be wearing a mask and no one is against making people not wear masks because of their health. It's completely about crime and accountability. If you are immunocompromised and you rob a gas station, then you probably are going to get arrested. But not because you wore a mask to protect your health, but because you robbed a gas station. It's about preventing crime, keeping people accountable, and we should be wearing masks if we don't want to get sick.

If you're in a protest, if you're not breaking the law, your First Amendment rights are protected. The First Amendment is extremely important. It is one of the basis of our Constitution that protects us and helps keep our elected officials, our police officers, everybody accountable. And we need to protect the First Amendment. But striking this bill down, voting against it is not doing

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that.

I hope that you vote yes. I hope that when you go home and you look at your kids, you look at your spouse, know that they're safer. When you see an old lady crossing the street, know that you're helping keeping your community safe because you voted yes.

Stop terrorists now. Stop them in your tracks.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. KHAN: It is up to you to do the right thing. This isn't about left or right or Democrat or Republican. This is about doing the right thing. And this bill absolutely helps everybody. And if you haven't read it, please give it a read because it is very straightforward. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Chris Schneider.

MR. SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much, Mr. Presiding Officer. Appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. My

1  
2 name is Chris Schneider. I am the vice  
3 president of the Wantagh-Seaford  
4 Homeowners Association, and I am here on  
5 behalf of our board to express our  
6 support for the Mask Transparency Act,  
7 sponsored by Legislator Pilip.

8 As a community organization, we  
9 believe in free speech and public safety.  
10 Both are critical to our communities.  
11 People should be able to express  
12 themselves peacefully and express their  
13 opinions peacefully. But when that  
14 expression turns violent and endangers  
15 the safety of others, government has a  
16 responsibility to act and protect us.  
17 We've seen masked protesters wearing  
18 clothing or holding signs promoting  
19 terrorist organizations, intimidating,  
20 harassing members of the Jewish community  
21 and in some cases, advocating or engaging  
22 in violence against them. That's not  
23 peaceful protest. That's inciting hate.  
24 No one should live in fear of being  
25 targeted simply because of who they are.



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Sadly, that's happening right now.

Wearing a mask for health or religious or cultural reasons is entirely appropriate. And this legislation recognizes that and people will still be able to do so as they can now. Wearing it to conceal your identity while engaging in hate, violence or anti-Semitism is not constitutionally protected free speech. It's a threat to public safety, and it must be stopped.

So we thank Legislator Pilip for introducing this legislation, and we urge the members of the County Legislature to pass it to help our wonderful Police Department protect our communities and stop those who believe they can disrupt, spread hate and commit violence against others.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Eileen Muntz.

(Whereupon, no response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Juli

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Grey-Owens.

MS. GREY-OWENS: Good afternoon. My name is Juli Grey-Owens and I'm the executive director for Gender Equality New York. Our organization advocates for transgender, gender, nonbinary and intersex New Yorkers, and we do this work by providing crucial training and education to government agencies, law enforcement, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and places of worship. I have personally provided training to Nassau County Department of Social Services, the Nassau Police Academy, Hofstra University, Molloy College, Adelphi University, and countless churches in Nassau County.

During this past legislative meetings that dealt with the transgender athletic ban, we saw a significant lack of understanding about our community. Even those legislators who stepped up to support our community were in many cases confused and used wrong or outdated

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terminology. The gender expansive community that we advocate for faces an immense problem, as most people do not have a basic understanding of our community and the issues that we face. Along with the lack of factual knowledge, there is a significant amount of misinformation and outright lies that impacts the acceptance of our community. To rectify this issue, I plan to attend this Legislature's future monthly meetings and provide training and information to the members of this Body, their staff, and members of the audience during the three minute public comments.

So let's begin. And the best place to begin is that the birth of a baby. When a baby is delivered, the doctor or nurse examines the baby's genitals and assigns a sex. In most cases, either male or female. This sex assignment is important because from that moment on, it will be used on all legal documents for that person unless it's legally changed.

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2 If that person grows up and finds that  
3 that sex designation given at birth  
4 matches their internal sense of self,  
5 they are called cisgender. Importantly,  
6 that personal sense of self is defined as  
7 your gender identity. Although I don't  
8 know what's in each of your hearts,  
9 statistically speaking, most if not all  
10 of the County Legislators are cisgender  
11 because you probably have an internal  
12 sense of self -- again, your gender  
13 identity -- that matches the sex  
14 designation you were given at birth.

15 Please note that I said,  
16 statistically speaking, because experts  
17 believe that cisgender people constitute  
18 the majority of the world's population,  
19 estimating at 99.4% of the population.  
20 And to be clear, being cisgender has  
21 nothing to do with sexual orientation. It  
22 simply means that your personal identity,  
23 also known as your gender identity,  
24 matches the designation given at birth.

25 However, not everyone's gender

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identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth. These individuals are known as transgender. In my next appearance before the Legislature, I will discuss this community in greater detail.

Thank you for your attention.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Corinne Leat.

MS. UNGER: Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to speak here before you today. My name is Leat Corinne Rubin Unger, and I am the relative of Omer Shem Tow who is currently being held captive in Gaza For 304 days.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MS. UNGER: For 304 days since October 7th, I have been advocating and fighting for his release, along with hundreds of others, other hostages of various faiths and various nationalities. I, of course, have been attending private meetings pushing for his release, and also have been attending rallies and

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protests on a weekly basis.

I am grateful for the opportunity to safely protest and advance my voice, and then use my voice for those whose voices aren't being silenced right now. I am grateful for having my speech protected and taking advantage of the core values of this democratic country. But every time I go out to a protest, I encounter anti-American and anti-Israel radical terrorist supporters who cover their faces and cover their bodies in the exact same manner that the violent terrorists who kidnaped Omer covered their faces on that day. And they do this not for medical reasons and not for religious reasons, but for one simple reason: To avoid accountability.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MS. UNGER: Let me repeat that. Just as the terrorists who kidnaped 250 innocent human beings were masked and hid their faces, so did the protesters in New York and around the country on college

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and university campuses hide their cowardly faces.

Last week, the Prime Minister of Israel came to address Congress in DC. I went to protest in DC, not against Israel's existence and not against any particular group, but in support of life, for 115 human beings that remain captive in Gaza. Yet, I and my fellow protesters were arrested for wearing a shirt. I didn't protest violently. I only protested wearing a shirt that supported life. The police arrested me, and they did so because they could safely do so. We need to help our officers evade lawlessness so they can safely do their job as well.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MS. UNGER: Again, I am not against protesting. I believe in freedom of speech, but I am against a lack of accountability. I am against a lack of consequences. If anyone wants to call for the genocide or spread hate, they should

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have that right because they live in the United States of America. But they must have their faces shown so that if they cross a red line, they can be held accountable.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mary Carter Flanagan.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Susan Kaye.

MS. KAYE: I am from "Say no to the Casino". I am against this casino. It will do nothing for Nassau County. And I am demanding that Sands pack their stuff up and leave Nassau County. Take your damn casino, go to the top of Saks Fifth Avenue where belongs; Citi Field. It does not belong in Nassau County.

We have one of the highest rates of cancer in this state. At the end of January this year, I lost my sister to leukemia. There is not a trace of leukemia in my family. I myself did



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genetic testing. We have so much pollution going on, that's what probably caused it. And we need this casino with the rate of heavy traffic?

Our water system. We have another thing of high rate of breast cancer. Take a look at our water system. It's from all the DDT and PVC that was used in the '50s and '60s. Probably part of it is from Grumman, and we need a casino? This is actually a joke. This is one of Blakeman's things. He's shoving this casino down out throats because his brother works for Sands.

And I will say this again: Sands, take your casino. Go to the top of Saks Fifth Avenue, go to Citi Field; not in Nassau County. We could do a lot of better things with the land. I have talked about this a million times. How about teaming up with Hofstra and Northwell and building a legit allied health school.

In Nassau County -- I should say all

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of Long Island, we only have two legit Dental Assistant School, BOCES and Stony Brook. The rest of these are phony baloney for profits.

The Hempstead Works had a job training program. I was interested in an EKG. What did they have? A phony baloney, for profit school.

I am saying all you legislators vote no on the casino. There was only one person who voted no the last time was Delia Dewicky (sic). Vote with your heart, not with your money in your pocket.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Sam Fried.

MR. FRIED: Good afternoon to the Presiding Officer and to the Board. My name is Samuel Fried. I'm a First Sergeant, IDF paratrooper -- -

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. FRIED: Who served for two months in Gaza during the war and five months overall during the war.

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The Mask Transparency Act proposed by Legislator Mazi Pilip is about two things and two things only: Accountability and safety. Let's not pretend it's about anything else.

Since coming back from Gaza, I've attempted to have brokered peace through conversations. In one instance, I went to City College, in which I'm an alumni and try to have conversations at the encampment. I was restrained by a group of masked individuals who would not let me move in any direction. When I turned to the police officer standing by to ask them why they're not doing anything and if these people will be reprimanded, I quote, the police officer said to me, "it is too difficult to identify all the students because they were wearing masks".

In another instance, I spoke at an interfaith event in Boise, Idaho, two months ago. Before the event, four masked individuals tried to break in to the only

1  
2 Orthodox Jewish synagogue in Boise. After  
3 that, they attempted to lynch me at my  
4 hotel, unsuccessfully. These four  
5 individuals are still at large because  
6 they have not been identified, because  
7 they were wearing masks at the hotel that  
8 I was at. Unbelievable. We have been  
9 threatened. We have been physically  
10 assaulted. And these violent actors have  
11 been able to simply walk freely on the  
12 streets because they are unable to be  
13 identified. We cannot let thugs take over  
14 our city, our country and our  
15 universities, and by not stopping these  
16 masked thugs immediately, we encourage  
17 their actions.

18 The buck has to stop here. If we  
19 don't do something now and force  
20 accountability, this problem will only  
21 get worse. As a Jew, I feel targeted. But  
22 as an American, more importantly, I feel  
23 defenseless when we can't appropriately  
24 identify and stop these bullies from  
25 calling for our murder, using

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intimidation tactics to facing national monuments and burning the same flag, the American flag that so many heroes give their lives to defend under the guise of a mask.

(Whereupon, applause.)

MR. FRIED: In closing, In closing, I ask you one question: Do you support America or do you support terrorism? Please. Please consider that we pass the vote today. Thank you very much for your time.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Is Mayor Flanagan back in the room yet?

MAYOR FLANAGAN: Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. I'm Mary Carter Flanagan, the Mayor of the Village of Garden City, and I'm standing before you again on the issue of the casino proposal.

I urge you to not move this project forward by approving any lease agreement today. I think we all know what it is. It's not about protecting the County or

1  
2 keeping people's jobs. It's the first  
3 step towards a project that would be  
4 horrible for Nassau County. And I ask you  
5 to think long and hard about what you're  
6 doing. The Village of Garden City, we  
7 have, all eight members of the board of  
8 trustees voted on a unanimous resolution  
9 opposing the casino. I'll be submitting  
10 a copy of that again, as well as our  
11 written comments on the environmental  
12 issues that are signed by all eight  
13 members.

14 Why are we so adamantly and  
15 unequivocally opposed to this casino  
16 project? Our community and the  
17 communities all over Nassau County. We do  
18 not need more crime and we know it will  
19 bring more crime.

20 We don't need more DWI fatalities,  
21 which it will bring.

22 We don't need more addiction in  
23 Nassau County, which it will surely  
24 bring.

25 We don't need the pollution that

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will come with this project. Nor do we need the traffic that will come with this project.

One thing that struck me, and I think other officials, is when a Sands executive and in a moment of candor admitted to us that they're not expecting tourists. Now, I was at the first presentation here and they said quite the contrary. It was going to be people would come from all over to this destination, Nassau County. I didn't believe it then. I don't believe it now. And none of you should believe it either.

I also thought it was interesting when they were asked why Nassau County? They like the demographics. So what's coming here is horrible for Nassau County and your elected officials. You're in a position to stop it. And I beg you to consider doing that today.

I will just read briefly the unanimous resolution, last one from the Board of Trustees:

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Whereas, the Board has received considerable input from residents across the village in opposition to the development of a casino at the Nassau hub site; and

Whereas, the serious security issues that surround casinos are well known, including DWI, prostitution, drugs, human sex trafficking, compulsive gambling, and, moreover, severely negative impact in our village road roadways; and

Whereas, the Board urges the Nassau County Legislature and the Nassau County IDA to actively seek out development ideas which will enhance our communities; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Board, on behalf of the residents of Garden City, is adamantly opposed to a casino with the Nassau Hub site.

So, please, consider what you're doing today and rethink it.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ari Ackerman.



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MR. ACKERMAN: Thank you so much for having me today. I'm Ari Ackerman. A loud and proud American Jewish activist. And I will also say a happy birthday to Ariel Beavis, whose picture you have right there, whose held in Gaza captive for 304 days, five years old.

I want to say clearly, for the record, I support Legislator Pilip's Mask Transparency bill today.

Come on, let's be clear, this bill is about common sense. In most cases, individuals who wear a mask at protests are not afraid of Covid. They are not for religious or cultural purposes. But this bill does make those exceptions. But the mask at protests in large part, are to conceal their identity in order to harass and intimidate, and in large part spew Jewish hatred and anti-Israel rhetoric.

The masks are being used outside the Nova Exhibition, a memorial to the massacre that took place at the peaceful music festival. They're being used at

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Columbia University to break into and take over buildings and consequently, because of the mask, not get prosecuted.

I love the analogy earlier that you can't drive without a recognized license plate. These rallies where masks are so prevalent, have flags of American designated terrorist organizations, pictures of terrorist leaders, and they burn American flags. These are not activists; they are antagonists. These are the facts.

This bill is not only a Jewish issue. This bill was brought and originally formulated to protect the black community against the KKK and eliminated during Covid. We trust our amazing cops who can tell right from wrong about why a mask is being worn, and arrest those who are using the lack of this law to harass and intimidate.

Please do the right thing. Vote yes today. Thank you, Mazi, for standing tall. God bless America. Am yisral chai.

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Bring them home now.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We're going to now move into our calendar. It'll be a short one, by the way, so don't worry. And after that, we'll return to some of these items that are controversial.

(Whereupon, public interruption.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I heard you. And my answer is you don't say here you're for it or against it. Most of these things, I just call them in the order that I got them. And every single person who wants to speak on the mask bill for or against will be given a chance to do so when we have the hearing in just a few minutes.

Mr. Pulitzer, please go ahead and call the roll.

CLERK PULITZER: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Deputy Presiding Officer Thomas McKevitt?

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Here.

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CLERK PULITZER: Alternate Deputy  
Presiding Officer John Ferretti?

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Alternate Minority  
Leader Siela Bynoe?

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Carrie  
A. Solages?

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Debra  
Mule?

LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator C. See  
William Gaylor, III?

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator John  
Giuffre?

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Mazi  
Pilip?

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Scott  
Davis?

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Present.

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CLERK PULITZER: Legislator James  
Kennedy?

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Patrick  
Mullaney?

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Seth  
Koslow?

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Present.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Scott  
Strauss?

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Present.

CLERK PULITZER: Deputy Minority  
Leader Arnold Drucker?

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator  
Rosemarie Walker?

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Samantha  
Goetz?

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Michael  
Giangregorio?

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Here.

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CLERK PULITZER: Thank you. Minority  
Leader DeRiggi-Whitton?

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
Here.

CLERK PULITZER: Presiding Officer  
Howard Kopel?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Here.

CLERK PULITZER: We have a quorum,  
sir.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Okay.

We have a motion to suspend the  
Rules by Alternate Presiding Officer  
Ferretti, and seconded by Legislator  
Koslow.

All those in favor of suspending the  
Rules, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of  
the Full Legislature respond in  
favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: The Rules are suspended. We have a number of consent items. These are items which have gone through Committees, and the Majority and Minority have discussed them and have agreed that no further debate or discussion is required.

And I'll call them now:

Item five, Ordinance 30; Item six, Ordinance 31; Item seven, Ordinance 32; Item eight, Ordinance 33; Item nine, Ordinance 34; Item 10, Ordinance 35; Item 11, Resolution 99; Item 12, Resolution 100, Item 13, Resolution 101; Item 14, Resolution 102; Item 15, Resolution 103; Item 16, Resolution 104; Item 17, Resolution 105; Item 19, Resolution 107, Item 20, Resolution 108; Item 21, Resolution 109; Item 22, Resolution 110; Item 23, Resolution 111; Item 24, Resolution 112; Item 25, Resolution 113; Item 26, Resolution 114; Item 27, Resolution 115; Item 28, Resolution 116; Item 29, Resolution 117; Item 30,



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Resolution 118; Item 32, Resolution 120;  
Item 33, Resolution 121; Item 34,  
Resolution 122; Item 35, Resolution 123  
and Item 36, Resolution 124. Motion by  
Legislator Davis, seconded by Legislator  
Kennedy.

All those in favor of those items,  
please say, "Aye."

(Whereupon, all members of  
the Full Legislature respond in  
favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those  
items passed unanimously.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Next is Resolution 106, which is a resolution authorizing the County Attorney to compromise and settle the claims of plaintiff and the action of Beechwood Benedict Merrick, LLC versus County of Nassau. Legislator McKevitt is recusing himself from voting on this item and not participating in debate or discussion.

(Whereupon, Legislator McKevitt exits Chambers and is not a part of this vote.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Motion on this item by Legislator Pilip and seconded by Legislator Bynoe.

All those in favor of Resolution 106, please say, "Aye."

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That item  
is unanimous.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Resolution 125 authorizes the County Assessor and/or Treasurer and/or Receiver of Taxes to correct erroneous assessments of real properties in various school districts.

Once again Legislator McKevitt is recusing himself on this item, not participating in debate, discussion or vote.

(Whereupon, Legislator McKevitt is not present in chambers.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Motion on this item by Legislator Walker, seconded by Legislator Drucker.

All those in favor of Resolution 125, please say, "Aye."

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That item  
is unanimous.

Would somebody invite Deputy  
Presiding Officer McKevitt back?

(Whereupon, Legislator  
McKevitt returns to chambers.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Resolution 119 ratifies a Memorandum of Agreement making amendments to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County of Nassau and Nassau Community College, and the Adjunct Faculty Association of Nassau Community College.

We have a motion On that by Legislator Giangregorio and seconded by Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

Anyone here from the Administration?

MR. GROSS: Good afternoon. John Gross, counsel to the College.

You have before you a negotiated agreement between the Adjunct Faculty Association, a very important organization for the instruction of students of the college. About 50% of the courses are taught by adjunct faculty.

The agreement is for a three year period. This bargaining unit does not have incremental movement, so whatever percentage was agreed to is all there is in terms of compensation package. It's 3%

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for the first two years and 2.75% for the balance of the term of the contract.

There are other provisions that are administrative in nature.

The MOA, creates a committee for study of seniority issues and some other questions that were not fully resolved at the bargaining table. But as often occurs in labor relations, committees are established to continue the study during the term of the contract.

Another provision, there is some minor payment for accumulated sick leave at the point of retirement. The amendment was put in the contract that anybody terminated for cause for misconduct will not be granted that benefits. And we created another benefit, a college business day where members of this unit who typically teach 1 or 2 courses a semester will be given a college business days for attendance and continuing education programs and professional meetings.

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This was very appropriate professional negotiations. There was no major disputes between the parties other than compensation, and we reached these numbers. The amount of money that is appropriated that will be necessary for appropriation appears in the college budget.

So, respectfully, on behalf of the College, and typically I don't say things on behalf of AFA, but on behalf of the AFA, the union, we would ask that this be approved.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you, Mr. Gross.

Legislator Drucker.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: John, nice to see you.

I'd like to commend you and your counterpart on the AFA for hammering out this agreement. I proudly served on the Board of Trustees for four years, and I remember how dedicated and what a service the adjunct faculty provided to the



1  
2 students of the college and what they  
3 continue to do today. They are the  
4 lifeblood of the student body and their  
5 education. Without them, the College  
6 would be in serious trouble, so it is  
7 welcome. And I do remember how difficult  
8 collective bargaining sessions were and  
9 continue to be. So again, I want to  
10 commend you and your team and the  
11 Administration and the AFA for hammering  
12 out this agreement, which is going to  
13 serve the student body very well for the  
14 next three years. So thanks again.

15 MR. GROSS: Thank you.

16 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any other  
17 questions of the Legislators?

18 (Whereupon, no verbal  
19 response.)

20 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

21 MR. GRAY: Mr. Presiding officer,  
22 how are you?

23 Kenneth Gray from the law firm of  
24 Bee, Ready, Fishbein, Hatter and Donovan,  
25 outside labor counsel to the County. As

1  
2 you were aware, the AFA members are with  
3 the County and the Community College are  
4 joint employers in this case. So I just  
5 want to point out that there will be no  
6 impact on the County's budget concerning  
7 this Memorandum of Agreement. The College  
8 has calculated the cost of this three  
9 year MOA and all salary costs and  
10 fundings for the agreement come from the  
11 College's budgeted funds for contractual  
12 increases. If there are any questions.  
13 Thank you very much.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

15 Thank you. Apparently, there are none.

16 All those in favor of those items,  
17 please say, "Aye."

18 (Whereupon, all members of  
19 the Full Legislature respond in  
20 favor with, "Aye".)

21 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
22 opposed?

23 (Whereupon, no verbal  
24 response.)

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: The item

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is unanimous.

MR. KORNBLUTH: I'm sorry I take up your time, but I just wanted to thank you.

My name is Jerry Kornbluth. I am the Vice President For Community and Governmental Relations and spokesperson at Nassau Community College. On behalf of the Administration, I'd like to thank you for your support. And just to reiterate what Legislator Drucker said, it was a difficult negotiation, but the two sides came together and at the end of the day, they worked it out. And that's the way collective bargaining should be done. So thank you for your support and I appreciate that.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you, Jerry.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We are going to do a hearing on a local law to prohibit the use of a mask or facial covering for the purpose of concealing an individual's identity in a public place.

Motion to open this hearing is made by Legislator Pilip and seconded by Legislator Giuffre.

All those in favor of opening the hearing, please say, "Aye."

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: The hearing is opened.

On Monday, July 15th, the Public Safety Rules Committee debated and discussed and received testimony regarding the proposed Mask Transparency Law introduced in response to the sharp

1  
2 uptick in anti-Semitic incidents often  
3 perpetrated by those in masks since  
4 October 7th, 2023.

5 This local law prohibited the use of  
6 masks or other facial coverings, which  
7 were worn with the intent to conceal  
8 identity in a public place, with  
9 exceptions for health and safety,  
10 religious or cultural purposes, or  
11 peaceful celebrations of holidays.

12 Minority and members of the public  
13 raise concerns regarding the application  
14 of the proposed local law and enforcement  
15 and police training. In response, staff  
16 members for the Majority and Minority  
17 met. Amendment was filed which limits the  
18 application of the mask ban to the  
19 following masked individuals:

20 1. Those who remain or congregate in  
21 a public place with other masked,  
22 disguised persons. In other words, not  
23 just a single person, but a group of  
24 people.

25 2. Those who intend by force or

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threat of force to injure, intimidate, or interfere with a person's exercise of a right.

3. Those who act with intent to intimidate, threaten, abuse, or harass another person.

4. Those who are engaged in conduct which could reasonably lead to the institution of a civil or criminal proceeding with the intent of avoiding identification in the preceding.

The exceptions to the local law for health, safety, religious, cultural purposes for celebrations and holidays, they still remain in place. We have those exceptions and those people who are wearing for those purposes under this proposed law can continue to wear a mask when they need to. In other words, no one's going to be stopped because you're wearing a mask because you're immunocompromised or the like.

The application of this law is very narrow and addresses specific concerns.

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Before I get to the Commissioner, let me let me just say that this is not an attack on people of any type or sort or any religion or any anything whatsoever. This is merely something that is being instituted as a public safety measure.

As was stated by one of the commentators, one of the state senators, this was the law in New York State for what was it 175 years. This was the law in New York State up until 2019. In 2018, if you walked around with a mask, a police officer would come over and say, don't. Covid came, the State Legislature revoked that law. Similar type laws have been passed in other states. It has been vetted through the courts and they have been found to be constitutional.

So with that, I am going to invite Commissioner.

(Whereupon, off record discussion.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL:

Commissioner, just a moment. We're going

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to have a statement from Legislator Pilip.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

First of all, I would like to thank all the elected officials and all the people who are here to support the Mask Transparency Act. I'm grateful to have Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder here today to help discuss the proposed Mask Transparency Act.

Before we call the Commissioner, I want to offer a statement on what I hope this bill will accomplish and add some context to the amendment we will offer.

This legislation was written for one simple purpose: To keep our residents safe. Some have asked me why this bill is so important. My simple answer is this, I am sick and tired of people being harassed, intimidated, attacked, physically hurt, and feeling unsafe. I have been to CUNY, Columbia, local high schools, community meetings, rallies in



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Great Neck, Eisenhower Park, Oyster Bay, Syosett, Plainview, and more. I have heard the people speak loudly and clearly; they want this done.

In 2020, in order to stop the spread of the Covid 19 virus, New York State repealed the section of law that made it a crime for groups of people to wear a mask in public. However, after the Covid emergency had passed, the State took no action to craft legislation that would be both protective of the public health as well as protective of the public safety. So because the State has not done their job, we will do it here in Nassau County and take the lead.

On October 7th and the weeks afterward, I have been speaking to groups, synagogues and schools about about hate. Why? Because hate incidents in New York state skyrocketed. Jewish people all over New York state were subject to the physical and verbal assault. Many times the thugs were

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cowards hiding their faces behind mask at protest and march. In the audience today I see some friends who have been assaulted or personally impacted. I thank you for your courage and being here and sharing your stories.

We also know that criminals wear masks to conceal their identity when they commit crimes: Shoplifters, drug dealers, even those people that steal packages from doorways will wear masks to prevent themselves from being identified.

The law which we are to consider today was based in large part on this state of Virginia mask statute. Virginia's statute was originally enacted in the 1950s to prevent members of the KKK from wearing masks and hoods to further their racist and hateful activism. Several other states have similar laws, including Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina and, until 2020, New York State. These laws have been upheld in federal court when

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challenged.

To be absolutely clear, this law does not apply to those that wear masks to protect themselves or others from a transmissible disease, or for other health or safety purposes. The law does not apply to those that wear facial coverings for religious purposes, or to celebrate holidays or cultural events.

As our amendment makes clear, this law will apply to those that would gather with other masked people, just like the law was in New York State prior to 2020. It will apply to those that would intentionally harass, threaten, or intimidate another person, or is engaged in conduct that can get them harassed.

Also, we added this additional condition to enforcement based on the public comment we received at the Committee and conversation with our colleague, Legislator Davis. This new language was based in part on Florida's anti masking statute.

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Again, Commissioner Ryder, thank you for being here. I would like to thank some very special people who come here today who will speak shortly. And thank you for all the fight you are doing against any form of hate.

Today we will take a strong step forward. Working with our police, this law will make a difference. With that, I turn the floor back to the Presiding Officer. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Minority Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
Thank you, Presiding Officer.

I want to make it very clear that everyone up here does not want anyone or any resident of Nassau County to ever feel threatened or not secure in our neighborhoods. That is our number one priority. And we do have an excellent police force that ensures that.

However, if we are going to do a bill, I just want to go over a couple

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2 things because we've had so many bills  
3 that have been submitted, especially by  
4 this Administration, only to get thrown  
5 out and overturned. And why spend and  
6 waste taxpayer money on us trying to  
7 defend a bill that will not hold up  
8 constitutionally? And I've had this bill  
9 reviewed. We've all had it reviewed. And  
10 honestly, there's a number of flaws that  
11 we think we can resolve and work  
12 together.

13 Yes, Legislator Davis and Legislator  
14 Pilip met and they had a good meeting.  
15 But that wasn't the agreement. The  
16 agreement was for our legal staff to meet  
17 with your legal staff. It's on the  
18 record. It was actually even cited in  
19 *Newsday*. That never happened; we would  
20 still like to do that. The reason being a  
21 number of things which are going to sound  
22 very detailed and I'm sorry to bore some  
23 of you if this is what you're going to  
24 find, but they're important.

25 First of all, the prior law on New

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York state books had this in place, but it was a violation. This law now is saying it's going to be a misdemeanor, meaning if a police officer sees someone with a mask and perceives their intent to be questionable and nefarious, they could be sentenced to up to a year in jail. What you have to understand is the penal law, the criminal law does not allow for that. You cannot be arrested on perceived intent. It's not me that makes the law, but that is the criminal law. I cannot perceive what someone is going to do. You can't leave it up to me or any of these police officers to decide a perceived intent. If someone is committing a crime, okay. But if it's a perceived intent, it's not enough to convict someone of a misdemeanor. The violation we would have been okay with, not a misdemeanor. A misdemeanor is a year in jail for perception. So that is one reason.

There's a number of other questions

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as to whether or not -- even their bill doesn't even describe what a mask is. And so that is going to throw it out just on that. So there's some changes that have to be made.

We agree with the intent, but it's a poorly written bill. It was never given -- I'm sure, I asked, I tried to find out what criminal judge or attorneys helped them. I didn't get an answer. There wasn't any. So rather than rush through this right now and submit a bill I can guarantee you is going to be overturned and thrown out and make us look like like we don't know what we're doing once again; why do that? Why not just stop for a minute. Let's meet and let's hash it out. I have some people that are experts and are volunteering to help us. They're past criminal judges in Nassau County. They will come and meet with us. We have other people that were prior attorneys here with the County that will meet with us. Again, submitting this bill is just

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going to look foolish when it's sent back to us and rejected. And I think the bottom line is we want to do this; we want to do it right.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Drucker.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I'd like to start off by commending Legislator Pilip and your co-sponsors for this bill. We support -- every single one of us here on our side, understands and recognizes the need for legislation to combat this form of activity. Cowardice. Harassment. Anti-Semitism. I'm a Jew and I have been exposed to anti-Semitism my entire life. It's not something that you learn to live with, but you coexist with it. But then October 7th happened, and October 7th changed everything. No one was more repulsed, disgusted, angered, frustrated by what we saw on the college campuses throughout this country. It was deplorable and it frustrated the heck out



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of me and a lot of others, I'm sure, recognizing that we need to do something. But I am also an attorney, but that's kind of irrelevant. I believe in our fundamental freedoms, and I'm always concerned about trampling on the rights, our First Amendment rights, our constitutional rights of citizens who are not contemplating or attempting to do criminal acts, but may be lumped into a category because they're attending something that they did not understand.

What we do not want to do ever is draft and craft legislation with a broad paintbrush. That is always a dangerous way to do things. You need to use a fine brush and you have to take the time. When this bill was first presented to us -- and again, we support the notion of anti-mask bill. We support it -- But when this bill was first presented and we saw and we expressed when we were before committee, we expressed our concerns, and we pointed out the flaws in this law that

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2 were obvious to us, and it should have  
3 been obvious to everybody. If you just  
4 simply extract the emotion out of it and  
5 look at the bill exactly the way  
6 legislators and lawyers and judges have  
7 to look at it and will look at it -- and  
8 we proposed changes. The amendments that  
9 the Majority put forth, in my opinion,  
10 actually made things worse. They  
11 substituted language that again looked to  
12 be more vague, more obtrusive, more open  
13 for interpretation. And what it does is  
14 it puts our police officers, our valiant,  
15 brave, unsurpassed police officers in  
16 this county in a very dangerous,  
17 difficult position. More dangerous than  
18 what they have already. They're now going  
19 to be asked to confront people in the  
20 effort to enforce this law. And now  
21 they're going to be perhaps embroiled in  
22 confrontations with people that they  
23 didn't have to be involved in.

24 So we proposed an alternative law.  
25 We filed it this morning, and we're

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hoping that the Majority will give it some consideration. We spoke before session, and it seems that the Majority is not willing to do that.

You know, I find rather ironic and hypocritical that some of our state representatives who appear before us today talk about how frustrated they are with one party rule up in Albany. Well, you know what, folks? We have one party rule here in Nassau County because we filed a bill that we think complements Legislator Pilip's bill; complements it, confines it, makes it more narrow, targets it. But you know what? They won't even consider it. All we're asking for is an opportunity to sit down and try to meet and come up with a compromise that satisfies what everyone's trying to attain here, but they won't do that. So that's what I find ironic, because in effect, we have one party rule here in Nassau County.

So there are a lot of concerns here.

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I just want to reiterate that this caucus supports the notion that anti-mask legislation is needed, but we can't do it with a broad paintbrush, which is what this bill does.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

There's a lot to respond to. We have a process in Nassau County. When a bill is written, we have Committees, which we had in this case, we had discussion, we had debate. And in this instance we had suggestions from the Minority. Well, we took those suggestions. We worked with Minority members, and we made amendments based mostly on the suggestions made by the Minority. So let's be clear, the bill that we will be voting on today is a bipartisan bill. Members of the Minority worked with the Republican Majority to make amendments to the bill.

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(Whereupon, off the record  
comments.)

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Please, let me  
let me speak.

Legislator Drucker just referred to  
legislation that was filed today. Today,  
just an hour before this meeting began.

(Whereupon, off the record  
comments.)

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Please let me  
speak.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: One at a  
time, everybody. One at a time, please.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Just an hour  
before this meeting began. So we haven't  
had time to review it. I did read it  
quickly, but to do an in-depth review  
that it deserves, we haven't had that  
time.

That being said, with a quick  
review, we talk about legality. My  
understanding is that that bill changes  
the class of felony that a person would  
be charged with if they commit a crime

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with a mask. Just to be clear, if we talk about legal authority, I'm not sure where the basis for that legal authority for this Body is. Just from a cursory review.

So when you talk about the bill that's actually before us that was not filed today at 12:00, this was the law. This was the law before 2020. This mask proposal has been litigated before. The idea that it's illegal is simply not the case. Yes, of course we have a right to the First Amendment freedom of speech, of course. But we do not have a right to make that speech with a mask on. That's been litigated.

(Whereupon, off the record comments.)

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Now, I know you're going to continue to go back and forth. We can't go back and forth. I'm just I'm just telling you it's been litigated. The highest court of the land has ruled in favor of it.

Now, we've heard common sense talked

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about; we've heard that phrase a lot today. There are clear exceptions in this bill. Clear exceptions for those who want to wear masks for their health and safety, for religious purposes. Those protections are in there. So there's really, in my opinion, there should be no concern of anything changing. We have the best police department in the country. They will be given the training needed to to enforce this legislation. And again, this is something that we work together on and should be supported by every member of this Legislature.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, I'm going to turn the floor over to Legislator Koslow. But before I do, I just want to point out that I haven't personally had a chance to review the new bill that that the Minority has submitted. We're not ignoring it. We're going to look at it. We will look at it. We will, if necessary, submit it to the

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County Attorney for an opinion as to whether or not we have certain powers to do certain things, and if necessary, we can come back and make amendments to any bill that we pass. But there's no reason that we shouldn't pass this today.

Legislator Koslow.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

(Whereupon, interruption from the audience.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm going to ask the audience, we know that this is a very emotional and very important issue, but please refrain from demonstrations. It just delays things. And, we'd like to have an orderly proceeding. Thank you.

Legislator Koslow.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: I was going to hold off and wait till we get into the specifics with Commissioner Ryder. But Legislator Ferretti, there are two things that you completely mischaracterized



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here, and I want to make sure that everyone's clear that you were mischaracterizing the fact that this is what you call a bipartisan resolution. We made suggestions. We didn't go back and forth. There was very limited conversation. There was no conversation between our legal teams. It was just the proposal that you brought forth with some modifications. Those modifications were not run by us. We did not agree to them. This is by no means about partizan resolution.

That being said, we are actually all in agreement that we need to do something here. This is the one time that I've seen in the last eight months on this dais that we all agree that we have to do something, but we as a Legislature, for some reason, will not work together. And that's the biggest problem I've seen so far. We can resolve this, but we won't meet and discuss it. We're prepared to do it. We are all in agreement that

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2 something has to happen here. Okay. We  
3 can reach bipartism on this. We can have  
4 a resolution that we can all agree on.  
5 This is not just because a couple of our  
6 Minority Caucus members in Committee gave  
7 you some feedback. That's the first  
8 mischaracterization.

9 The second mischaracterization,  
10 which I think is unfair and misleading to  
11 this public right here, is that this law  
12 was on the books; it certainly was not.  
13 It was not an independent law. It was a  
14 part of the loitering statute. It was a  
15 subsection of the loitering statute that  
16 was taken out. It was about one tenth of  
17 the length of this one, and it did not  
18 result in a criminal conviction, but it  
19 did result in a violation, which is up to  
20 15 days in jail and a \$250 fine. Still  
21 punishable under law, but not something  
22 that is such an aggressive response to  
23 theoretically, nothing happening. So the  
24 fact that you think this is the same law  
25 that was on the books is disingenuous and

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misleading. And I think we have to clarify that.

Now at this point, Mr. Presiding Officer, based on what you said before and the fact that you're willing to give our proposed resolution or legislation some consideration, I'm making a motion to table this current legislation that we're voting on so that we can actually have a bipartisan discussion and resolve this the right way.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: I second the motion.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We need quiet here so that we can move this along. We've got a lot of work to do here. There's no debate on a motion to table. So I'm just going to call for a vote. Actually, no, we're not voting on the item. You can make your motion to table when we get to the vote on the item. I'm reminded that this is a hearing.

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LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: That's fine.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm also reminded of an ancient saying that, that there's a lot of work to do, and the day is short and we're not required to finish everything and make it perfect, but we're not excused from making a start. And I think that's what we need to do here. Let's make a start and let's get this on the book so that we have something. If we need to make amendments to it, we will go ahead and do that in the future.

Legislator Ferretti was mentioned in in the last speaker's comments --

(Whereupon, interruption from the public.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Please sit down. Ma'am, this is your second time. This is your second time here up front. I do not recognize you. And I am going to have to ask for you to be escorted our if you disrupt the proceedings. Please have a seat. Every single person who wants to speak on the mask bill will be given --

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(Whereupon, continued  
interruption.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Officer,  
you want to help this lady, she seems to  
be stuck here.

We're not going to tolerate people  
who are trying to disrupt our  
proceedings. Will not be tolerated.

Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you,  
Presiding Officer. Just for clarification  
purposes, my point is there was a form of  
mask legislation in place in New York  
State for over a century. In addition to  
that, in addition to that, there's  
currently forms of mask legislation on  
the books today. Ironically, in a  
municipality where one of the speakers  
today, a former elected official governed  
over, I'm referring to the Village of  
Hempstead, where there is currently  
legislation in the village code which  
restricts mask wearing. So again, I'm not  
critical of that legislation in the

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Village Code. But let's be clear, this type of legislation existed for over a century. It exists today and people are wearing masks and not being arrested. That's my point. And the mask wearing has been litigated in the Supreme Court. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Pilip.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Unfortunately, this side of the aisle, you guys play politics. Pure politics. We introduced this bill. I had a conversation with two of you, and I saw the email. And how come the bill that was there to protect the African-American? Okay, until 2020, all of a sudden, when it's come to the Jewish people, no. We can't touch it. How come? It is -- absolutely. What you have done the last ten months to protect the Jewish people?

(Whereupon, applause.)

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(Whereupon, audience  
applause overcomes

Legislator Pilip; inaudible.)

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Just to let you  
know what they're offering has nothing to  
do with our bill. They don't even care  
about our bill. It's not going to protect  
the Jewish community. Therefore, I'm not  
going to support your bill, and this is a  
bill that's going to pass today. Thank  
you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator  
Mule.

LEGISLATOR MULE: I've never been so  
insulted on this dais. I've never been so  
insulted. I'm shocked. Beyond shocked.  
We have said clearly that we are for  
absolutely for the intent of this bill.  
We support it 100%. We're just saying  
let's work together. Let's really work  
together, not just with one legislator  
who came on his own, wasn't speaking for  
the entire caucus. Let's work together.  
This doesn't have to be passed today.

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It's important. Let's do it right. Let's be collegial. Let's behave appropriately. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Davis.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone.

I just want to thank all of you for coming here today and expressing your concerns. And I just want to take this opportunity to frame out exactly what this issue is so there's nothing left to guess.

Everyone in this Legislature, all the legislators here, we all stand against hate. My name is Scott Davis. My mother's name was Delia Glassman. My grandmother's name was Pearl Glassman. I have history going back to Eastern Europe myself. And I'm certainly sensitive to anti-Semitism and all the issues that surround it. That's really not what this issue is about.



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(Whereupon, interruption  
from the audience.)

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: What we are here  
today to do is to make a law that can be  
enforced in an equitable fashion. We want  
to prevent any of this law to be used --  
we don't want anyone to use a mask --

(Whereupon, interruption  
from the audience.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Please,  
everyone, listen here. If we have loud  
demonstrations, if we don't have order,  
we're going to have to clear the room. We  
want to hear your opinion. We want to  
hear it in an orderly fashion at the  
proper time. If we're going to have  
shouting, we're going to clear the room  
and you're not going to get a chance. So  
those of you who are disrupting the  
proceedings, think about that. You're  
going to prevent other people from  
speaking. You're going to prevent us from  
hearing all of your opinions. Allow us to  
do our work. We will do the right thing,

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as everyone on this dais sees the right.  
Allow us to do our work and refrain from  
demonstrations.

Legislator Davis, continue, please.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Thank you. So we  
wish for this law to prevent those intent  
on committing criminal acts to use masks  
as a way to conceal one's identity and  
avoid criminal liability; we want that.  
We also want clarity in enforcement,  
which eliminates confusion and inequity  
in enforcement. We also stand for the  
idea that there are consequences that  
follow from violating this law.

In fact, our proposed law is more  
severe than the one that's on the dais  
right now. Our proposed law provides a  
bright line where if an individual is  
engaged in any form of criminal activity  
and they are wearing a mask to conceal  
their identity, their potential sentence  
is enhanced. Their category of a crime is  
increased. So we stand for that. We just  
want to make sure that we do it right.

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A surgeon doesn't do surgery with a sledgehammer. They do it with a scalpel. They do it carefully after studying the situation and doing it right. And that's all that we want to do. We want to make sure that we don't cast a net and prevent what, in Leat's own words, are legitimate protesting. You heard it from her, and I agree with her. But there is a line where that can't be crossed, and when it is, those who cross it should pay for it. We stand for that idea as well.

And so all we're asking is very simple, for us to have a further conversation about this and let's get it right. And just to clarify my conversation, when this bill was or proposed law was brought before the Rules Committee, I expressed concern about it to the point that I did reach out to Legislator Pilip; I did. And there was an amendment that was filed predicated in part on my conversation with you was one telephone conversation for about 15

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minutes. There was no back and forth. There was no further conversation. We as a Legislature have never sat in the room together at a table and had a back and forth. I suggest that we have a moment right now. We have a moment where we can provide protection in a way that is constitutionally sound. All we need to do is get together, sit down and get it done.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. And I would respond that we're going to -- the Majority -- we intend to pass this today; we will pass this today. And we will we will look at the legislation that you have proposed. We will do that. We just got it. We will look at it. And if it strengthens this bill as you say you want to do, we will go ahead and amend it. We want to make it stronger.

Anyway, Legislator Feretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Legislator Davis, just just based on your comments. As I understand it and correct me if I'm

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wrong, the legislation that the Minority, filed today, would increase the penalty for those who committed a crime wearing a mask; am I hearing that correct?

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: All right. So I think that's a main difference between the two bills. The bill filed today by the Minority may increase penalties for those already victimized by the crime. Our bill seeks to prevent a victim from ever occurring.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: And that is a problem because --

(Whereupon, crosstalk.)

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Let me just finish, please. In order to prevent some thing from happening --

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I need everyone to speak only when you recognize. No back and forth without being recognized. Also, remember that there is some closed captioning going on, and also the words can't be transcribed.

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If everyone is talking at once, the record can't be kept and we just won't have a record and no one will be heard. So one at a time, I will let everyone speak. I promise. You won't be shut out. Now it's Legislator Ferretti's turn. You will get your turn again next.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Preventing hate is never a problem. That's what we're trying to do is prevent victimization. Prevent having to deal with the victims, not deal with it after the fact. And that is not a problem. That's what we're trying to prevent.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: What you're suggesting is mind reading. That doesn't withstand constitutional muster. Our proposed legislation merely says that once you step over that line between protected speech, now is a problem and it will be an enhancement based on wearing of a mask to conceal your identity. What you're suggesting is being proactive and reading somebody's mind. That is not the

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law. That is not how the law works.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. I'm going to invite Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder.

By the way, Legislator Davis, I think what we're trying to say is we're going to look at yours, and if it's better, we don't want to let the perfect be the enemy of good. This is good. Yours might be better, but we're not going to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Anyway, Commissioner, please.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, sir. So I'm here on behalf of the Administration to ask the questions and any concerns that you may have regarding the Mask Bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Yes. Tell us, can the police officers be trained properly so that they are able to discern which people need to be cautioned or arrested if it comes to that?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: So obviously,

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this thing's gone in a lot of different directions. If you remember, during the George Floyd protests being over 300 protests here in Nassau County, not one act of violence, not one criminal mischief, and not one arrest. We were respectful to the protesters as they went about to exercise their First Amendment. There'll be no change regarding that going forward when it comes to a protest, except for we do know that we are probably approaching the most violent political season that we've ever seen, at least in my lifetime. The intelligence has shown us that, the acts that we have seen at college campuses throughout the country, and we will probably see again come this fall season. We try to stay ahead of that. We try to stay respectful. We try to make sure that we are enforcing the laws. But when there is a kid throwing rocks at us that's hiding behind a mask, we cannot act on that. If we go into that crowd, we escalate that and



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then it gets worse.

We try and we do very well at it to remain that professional police department that respects the public loyalty, integrity, fairness and excellence. That is what is preached to every single recruit, not just to each other, but to the people in the community that we serve. To serve is a great honor that my cops have upon them. To do it right is -- it's demanded of them to be respectful.

So can we effectively enforce the law? The answer is yes. Can we use that law to to help us when in situations? Yes. During George Floyd there was a few, and I said it very carefully, a few very violent people in those crowds. We knew if we went in there, it would get worse. They pushed the young kids in front. They pushed the kids that were there to exercise that First Amendment, and then they threw the bottles from over the top. That's what happens in these situations.

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And they hide behind a mask that we cannot identify. In a normal way of what we would do, we would look into that crowd. We'd have video in that scenario, we go back later and make that arrest. But without that, we can't do that if the face is covered up.

I get it, and I get both sides of the argument, and you know I do. And we are truly respectful of our communities. We don't write laws, but we enforce them. And in almost all the situations that we currently have seen in the current protests, over 100 protests, no problems; no problems.

We are the safest county in America for the last several years. I am down another 15% in crime. I have good quality of life in a great place, and our County Executive and the Legislative Body supports it. But to continue to do that, you have to think forward and you have to think outside the box. This will not be a tool that will be used to abuse kids in

1  
2 our community. It will not. But it will  
3 be a tool that will help protect my  
4 officers when they're doing their job to  
5 protect you.

6 (Whereupon, applause.)

7 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: If a cop  
8 sees someone wearing a surgical mask,  
9 someone who's --

10 COMMISSIONER RYDER: The exceptions  
11 are in there and they are clear. Now, I  
12 will tell you this, we will go through a  
13 training process with this. I will bring  
14 in experts to speak. We will talk about  
15 what is considered a medical exemption,  
16 what is a religious exemption. Nobody  
17 understands the community better than  
18 Nassau County Police Department. We know  
19 what a religious exemption is and we will  
20 be respectful and ask when there is a  
21 medical exemption. And we will not let  
22 that happen. But an N95 mask is not a ski  
23 mask over your face. And I think that's  
24 the distinction that we have to make.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator

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Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Hi,  
Commissioner. How are you doing?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So you're  
familiar with the bill, as amended;  
you've read it?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, sir.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: There's been a  
position here that in order for this, I  
believe, that in order for this bill to  
be enacted by or enforced by the Police  
Department, they would have to read the  
mind of somebody wearing the mask. Do you  
agree with that?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: No. I don't  
have to read the mind of -- You can never  
understand the human mind and get into  
the human mind all the time. It's how we  
engage. I can give you an example. There  
was 6000 people walking down Merrick  
Avenue back in one of the very early  
protests that we had. And I remember, and  
I told my cops, engage. If they have not

1  
2 so nice words, move on. Move on to the  
3 next kid. Try to break down the anger,  
4 and let's make sure that they get to  
5 exercise their first amendment. And when  
6 they had 6000 people, you go wherever you  
7 want, we're going to protect you, and  
8 we're going to protect everybody. We  
9 would never go into a situation like that  
10 unless there is violence. We did have a  
11 zero tolerance for violence and a zero  
12 tolerance for criminal mischief, and that  
13 will remain the same. But if you're  
14 wearing the mask and you're in the back  
15 of that crowd, well, the problem is I  
16 cannot -- and if you are the antagonist  
17 and you are the person committing the  
18 crime, I'm not going in there, so I got  
19 two cops going into a crowd of 200. It  
20 doesn't work. The math is in there. So we  
21 have to better protect our cops, and  
22 that's what the tool does.

23 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And when  
24 you're referring to the 2020 gatherings,  
25 that was during the Covid.

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COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So there were many more people wearing masks at that time, right?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: We were right in the middle of Covid; yes, sir.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Right. So virtually everyone indoors or outdoors at that time was wearing masks.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's right.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Whereas, today, would you agree that far fewer people, especially outdoors, are wearing masks?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So in this instance, there's less of a pool of people where if you're wearing a mask, you'd be able to kind of identify them easier than four years ago.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: We've had probably over 100 protests since the

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attacks on Israel. And we have been at all these protests and respected the religious wardrobe that is worn by the individual. And that would be no different, right? We'd still be respectful of that exemption. But we know what the religious exemption is. And if they don't, they will be trained on to understand it and do it better.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And do you feel that if this bill was passed today, that this is a tool that would help law enforcement keep residents safe?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is 100% correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And if this bill was passed today, do you feel confident that the Police Department can still uphold residents' First Amendment rights?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: One hundred percent.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Minority

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Leader DeRiggi-Whitton.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Again, we're trying to do this the right way. And part of the reason why I know that this legislation is going to get thrown out is that there's no definition of what a mask is in this piece of legislation. There is not. That in itself you cannot have -- and you know this and I'm sorry you're in this position, I am -- But you know this as a fact that that this law, if it doesn't define what the law is about, is going to get thrown out. It does not have a description of what a mask is. That could be corrected very quickly if we just met together. And maybe if you had some criminal attorneys help you. Because honestly, I think the attorneys that are helping you are not very privy in this piece of law. So let's try to do this the right way.

The other thing is, Commissioner, and you know, I respect you completely. This law is different from what we had



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because it is basically for the idea of someone having a mask on, they can be arrested under a misdemeanor if the police officer feels that it's their intent. Intent is what their wording is, not ours. Their wording says intent. They question their intent. Can someone, according to the judicial laws be arrested for intent?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Intent is a part of the law. It's not the law. We would not arrest or enforce on something that says intent.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: That's what this law says.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: What we would do is, part of what the mask is, that individual --

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: With all due respect, Commissioner, their law says that they can be arrested for wearing a mask if there is an intent that's perceived.

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(Whereupon, public  
interruption.)

(Whereupon, off the record  
comments.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm asking  
every one of the legislators, please do  
not speak unless being recognized.

I see there's a lot of unrest going  
on in the room. Commotion. We're going to  
take a recess. Allow people to calm down.  
We're not going to continue until we have  
order here. Commissioner, I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's under  
control.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Then we'll  
continue. Legislators want to take your  
seats. Minority Leader to finish without  
interruption, and the police officers  
will once again assist anyone who is  
unable to maintain decorum.

Minority leader, would you continue,  
please?

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
Okay, so sometimes life gives us an

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example.

So again, because this law is different than the law that was on the books and it is now a misdemeanor as opposed to a violation, which is what it was before, in order to hit the threshold of the criminal judicial law as to how someone can be arrested just for wearing a mask, not for committing any other crime at all, just for wearing a mask based on a police officer's perception of their intent, does that fit judicial clearance?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: There would never be somebody arrested on their mental capacity. Right? So you say an intent. The answer is no. We don't arrest on intent.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
That's what the law says.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: But there is something actual that happens. So that mask that you're wearing in that crowd behind us starting to antagonize, that

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would be a mask that we say, please, you have to remove the mask. And if you don't remove the mask, then there is the option of that arrest.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

That is absolutely right. Because basically you just proved my point, which is that wearing a mask in itself and someone having an intent as to why this person on the second row is wearing the mask, I can't walk up to that person and say, my perceived intent is that you want to do something nefarious and arrest her on a felony as a police officer. So you need something, another crime like harassment does.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: It does give me the right to now engage and the right to now stop: Ma'am, can you please take the mask off? I have a medical condition. Well, then we'll talk; I have a religious exemption. Then we'll talk. But you're in that crowd of that protest, and you're wearing that mask, before this law, I

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could not engage. Now I can and prevent problems.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

The law says that they can be charged with a misdemeanor. Commissioner, I know you, you know the law. Can someone be arrested if they did not harass, if they did not do anything else other than wear a mask?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Again, I go back to, as I said before, in the Nassau County Police Department, that we have a professional image, that we go out and we'll treat people with respect. We would not go up and place the person in handcuffs without a question. But now the multi-tiered approach that it comes to doing that, to get to that level of probable cause, to make an arrest, we are at the right of inquiry. We're at mere suspicion. So we're now climbing the ladder. If the person who's standing there in the corner with the bulge sticking out of their waistband, that

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looks like a gun. We have the right by the law to engage. This gives me the right to engage. Before that, I do not have that right.

(Whereupon, public interruption.)

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Honestly, Commissioner, you're not answering my question. The fact of the matter is, what you're describing is other criminal acts. Okay. What we are talking about, what is written in this law, is that I have the right as a police officer to walk up to someone, number one, and question why they're wearing a mask, which under the Constitution, First Amendment right, if you read it, you're not allowed to do that. You're not allowed to question someone as to why they went there, it's a constitutional right that you can. So that is number one. You have no right to ask someone why they're doing something. They have a right to assemble. They have a right to

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do a lot of things that are, thank God, protected by our Constitution. We're not going to change the Constitution here in Nassau County. We're going to abide by it.

Number two, their law, the way it is written, is that someone can be arrested under misdemeanor, a year in jail, on the perception, the perception, that the police officer has just regarding the mask. What you're talking about is escalation, which I agree with. If somebody were to commit a crime and they were wearing a mask, then yes that should be reason enough to say to charge them with something higher because they're wearing the mask and their identity's concealed. Their law does not say that this is only about wearing a mask.

I have to tell you, Commissioner, and I have so much respect for you. You know that. Many of their members are not happy with being put in this position. Many of the Nassau County Police are not

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2 at all happy with this, because they  
3 realize that a misdemeanor is held to a  
4 higher standard. It cannot be held to a  
5 perceived intent. So all we have to do is  
6 sit down and work out that that wording.  
7 And again, why rush through something and  
8 get it done? This is just such a poor  
9 attitude to have. We are respected  
10 people that get paid a good amount of  
11 money to write good laws. And I don't  
12 understand why we're not just getting  
13 together and sitting down and really just  
14 hashing this out so that it can be held  
15 up in court. Otherwise, that in itself,  
16 the fact that there's no description of  
17 what a mask is, the fact that intent can  
18 cause a misdemeanor, my perceived intent?  
19 I can't perceive what she's intending,  
20 and I sit next to her for ten years. So  
21 how are you going to walk up to somebody  
22 and say that?

23 So the bottom line is. This law --  
24 we all support that no one should be  
25 harassed by anyone wearing a mask. We all



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2 support that. But the way it's written,  
3 it's going to just embarrass us because  
4 it's not legal. They haven't even  
5 consulted with anybody, and we have those  
6 people available. That's all that we're  
7 asking them to do is stop being -- this  
8 is just silly and stop representing us in  
9 a way that is sort of embarrassing. We  
10 really deserve, the taxpayers deserve  
11 better, and your police officers deserve  
12 better. They don't like the idea that  
13 they're going to be the ones that are  
14 going to have to judge with intent is  
15 with someone wearing a mask without  
16 another crime being committed.

17 I'm telling you, and Commissioner,  
18 they come to me, they come to me, all  
19 right? And I think it's because they  
20 think I'm going to say something and  
21 that's why. They are not happy with this.  
22 Being put in this position, they are not  
23 happy at all. So before we go ahead and  
24 say this is a good tool, I think we have  
25 to modify the law to make sure that it

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2 is. And it's not putting your own -- I'll  
3 tell you something. Your own police  
4 officers are going to be put in a very  
5 bad situation with this because they're  
6 going to have to really be expected to  
7 decide what someone's intent is. And  
8 again, that's not the level of law that  
9 is necessary for a misdemeanor.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator  
11 Drucker.

12 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: I just have a  
13 very brief question. I'm sorry. Because  
14 my voice is not going to hold up much  
15 longer.

16 Commissioner, your words: "It's how  
17 we engage". Right? That was your words.

18 COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct. Okay.

19 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Well, I'm  
20 concerned about -- and I expressed this  
21 earlier, is we don't want to make your  
22 jobs tougher. So now you're asked to  
23 engage someone who may have attended a  
24 rally for innocent purposes. Just  
25 attending a rally, not knowing in advance

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that there was going to be criminal activity or hate filled rhetoric turning into burning of flags and maybe throwing of things. But someone attended it innocently, they're standing on the side with other people wearing a mask, because maybe they felt that they didn't want to be exposed to a large group of people. Now you're being asked to engage that person. And what I believe is that by engaging that person, your officers now run the risk of perhaps a response that you didn't like, or that engagement escalates and now you got to get other officers involved.

All I'm saying is that the way this law is drafted now, because the law that was amended, the amendment adds the word congregate, congregate. What the heck is congregate? But if you're standing at a bus stop with a bunch of other people and you congregating? So we're now asking your police officers to engage when maybe they didn't need to engage, or maybe they

1  
2 don't need to engage. And now the  
3 potential for escalation is there. Would  
4 you agree with what I just said.

5 COMMISSIONER RYDER: In all  
6 fairness, I think you're twisting the  
7 word engagement around several different  
8 ways, right? My officers interact with  
9 the public every single day. As a matter  
10 of fact, we interact with the public over  
11 a million times a year, and we have 0.01%  
12 complaints against my officers, 0.0 1%.

13 (Whereupon, applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER RYDER: What these  
15 officers went through in the physical and  
16 verbal abuse during George Floyd and  
17 during the current protests should not be  
18 accepted by anybody, and most of the time  
19 it was done by a person wearing a mask.  
20 Hiding behind that mask because they did  
21 not want to be identified. So you're  
22 asking me and twisting my word  
23 engagement. Engagement is interaction,  
24 you know what I mean. We are the most  
25 peaceful police department in the

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country.

(Whereupon, applause.)

COMMISSIONER RYDER: If you don't trust your police department, don't vote for it.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: All I asked, Commissioner, was, do you think this law as written -- and now you didn't get a chance to compare it side by side with the companion law that we produced -- but if you look at this law, does this law now make your job harder by now engaging with people --

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's where the disconnect is. My officers are not going to go to start ripping people off and pulling that mask off their head. My officers are going to go out there and interact -- not engage -- interact with the public and start what we call that escalation. Common law right of inquiry, mere suspicion, reasonable suspicion. And that's where you get into the more contact. And in that common law right of

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inquiry, I can prevent the guy that's  
throwing the bricks from behind the line  
and prevent the poor kid in front, that  
innocent kid that's congregating with the  
rest of the crowd that's not wearing a  
mask. That's what happens. I saw it  
through all of those protests. We went  
through hell, my cops. And to tell me my  
cops think it's a bad bill, you're not  
telling the truth. Because my cops --

(Whereupon, public

interruption.)

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Everyone one of  
my cops you say go to you, they tell you?  
They didn't come to me.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
They're not happy with this piece of  
legislation.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: You said my  
cops are going to you.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
They are.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: I'm not  
commenting. I'm waiting for a question.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Bynoe and then Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Good afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good afternoon.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: You just made some comments earlier when you were asked about training and you said you were going to have experts come in. Could you talk a little bit about that for me?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Absolutely. Listen, we have to learn from history. We have to learn from our mistakes. George Floyd and Police Reform taught us a lot about our Police Department. And there were many failures that we had that we corrected. And we do better about it. And we get better every year. We continue to train to make our cops the best. When I've had people from the transgender community come in and speak to my cops, it's for a reason to understand it. I say it all the time. If you understand the environment, you police it better. We go

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into communities understanding the difference in the cultures, understanding the difference in the religions and reminding ourselves to be peaceful.

Of 360 protests, nobody in the country can tell us today that they did better than what Nassau County did. We took care of the people that protested, and we took care of the people on the side. You give me a law that says I can now "engage" or interact with that individual that's screaming and yelling and cursing and throwing things and pushing the young kids forward, yeah, it's a better tool. And that's exactly what happens during protests.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Commissioner Ryder, I will say, I even attended some of those protests. And the officers responded appropriately and it was as peaceful as demonstrations that we could witness right here in Nassau County as opposed to some certain areas in the country. So I thank you for that. And I



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thank the men and women of law enforcement.

But my question is, what type of training do you think your officers are going to need to be able to implement this because you said you would train them?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Just let me comment on one thing. That professionalism was not only by the Police Department, it was also our community. They were awesome. Here in Nassau County, they really, truly were.

I would bring in is obviously our legal department, people that speak to us on stop, question and understanding when you get to that level of frisk. What the law says. What the law says in this case, understanding what an N95 is, understand what a medical understanding what a hijab is, understanding what the religious exemptions would be, and then knowing the difference. And then at the same time, we teach the same thing that we've been

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teaching all along, deescalate. There's

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no reason to go in and yank that kid out

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right now. Wait. Grab him on the side.

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That's when you can interact with him and

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decide if the mask has got to go. We're

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not going into a crowd of 500 people when

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it's 100 cops. Like I said, the math

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don't work. But I know this. That person,

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by the end of this protest, will be

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stopped by the police. And now we'll know

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who he is because he's the guy that's

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causing these problems.

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LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So you mentioned

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that you would have the experts come in.

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It would be an opportunity to start

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defining what constitutes a mask, a job,

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etc. This bill, just so you know, does

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not specifically identify a medically

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graded mask as an acceptable use of a

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face covering for individuals who are

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actually seeking to wear the mask for

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that purpose. Just so you know. So I

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think it would make it a little more

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complicated. But beyond that, bringing in

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these individuals, you're going to create policy and procedure, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct. Yes.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: And then you're going to train it, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay. How would that training be implemented?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: It can be done at a precinct level. It can be done at the academy. It can be engaged in or in-service training. It can also be brought into the new training with the new tactical village. All of those things open up, and we are so in tune with the training that's needed to be out there right now for our officers.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you for walking me through that. So what does that look like in terms of a timeline?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: If there's a law that's changed today, we would immediately have to bring our officers

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and we can do it at command level, like I said, and go out to the precincts and feed it on those that have come into the current in-service and get it done so all of it can get done in a timely fashion.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay, but first we have to identify who the experts are. We have to bring them in. They have to help you create the policy and the procedure. And then we have to train it in the precinct and/or in the academy.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: The experts I speak of are already on staff. Our legal department, our training officers, our use of force officers, the same people that you see here, they're all trained constantly over and over. Consistency is how how we succeed. That training those experts are on staff now.

The training, if the law says it goes into place in 30 days, well, in that 30 days I'm covering the training for my officers.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Because based on

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2 this, it doesn't say 30 days. It says  
3 immediately. That's what it says. So  
4 that's a concern that we wouldn't take  
5 the time. And I -- you and I have worked  
6 I've worked with the PBA. I've worked  
7 with the SOA, DAI, National Night Out,  
8 backpack events, Christmas giveaways, all  
9 of those things. We did it together  
10 because we wanted to make sure we  
11 deepened the trust between community and  
12 police, and this is a whole new  
13 experience. We're now talking about  
14 heightening the offense for wearing a  
15 mask, which would elevate it to a  
16 misdemeanor now with a \$1,000 fine.

17 So I say that to say that we have  
18 done a lot of work together, and I don't  
19 want to erode any of that with a bill  
20 that does not adequately define what a  
21 mask is. Does it adequately provide for  
22 time for you to do the work that you  
23 would need to do if they were to pass  
24 this bill today? So that's a concern of  
25 mine that I'm putting on the record.

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I have some additional questions.

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But I think you're not in a position potentially to answer those, like, how would an officer question an individual who was wearing a mask to determine why they were wearing the mask? It sounds like that needs to be bubbled up through a discussion of experts and then trained.

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But I do have some additional

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questions, Presiding Officer, and I don't think that they should be directed to the Police Commissioner.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Who would

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you like to direct to?

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LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Is there somebody

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here from the County Attorney that can answer questions on the bill?

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Once we're

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finished with the Police Commissioner,

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we'll go ahead and do that. Are you

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finished with the Police Commissioner?

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator

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Ferretti.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you,

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Presiding Officer.

With regard to the face covering defined, this bill took directly from other bills. It was modeled off other states that have used this legislation and used the same language. If you define face covering, you're going to give people an out if they use a different type of face covering. It's pretty clear covering your face is a face covering. Number one.

Now we talk about -- I heard, Commissioner, you were asked about intent. Any crime has you need to have the mental state and do the physical act in order to commit a crime, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So your police officers are interpreting intent, recklessness and all different standards of mental state all the time, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: This idea that you have intent in order to be guilty of this misdemeanor, that's what laws do. Criminal law. In fact, isn't it true, Commissioner, that if you look at the New York State Penal Law specifically, 265.01 criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree, I don't expect you to know it by heart --

COMMISSIONER RYDER: I know what it is.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I'm sure you do; I do too.

A person is guilty of criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree when he/or she possesses any dagger, dangerous knife, dirt, machete, razor, stiletto, etc., with intent to use the same unlawfully against another. That's pretty similar to the bill that we're debating right now, isn't it?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Do your police



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officers have any issue whatsoever with the penal law that's been in effect for probably 60 or 70 years, determining intent under this --

COMMISSIONER RYDER: The act itself is the crime, the unclassified misdemeanor. So that act of wearing that mask is the crime. I don't have to show intent. The intent is presumed because of the fact that you're wearing it. But the difference is, and again, I go back to this, this is Nassau County Police Department. We're not going to go up and put somebody in handcuffs for wearing a mask. We're going to go up and we're going to interact with that individual, and we're going to climb the ladder and find out what his intent may be.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: But my question is, when it comes to criminal possession of a weapon, you need to have the weapon, and you need to have the weapon with the intent to use unlawfully against another, correct?

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COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So you need the mental state of intent to use the weapon, and you need to have the physical weapon. That's the physical act, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's correct. Okay.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Similarly, in this situation, you need to have intent and the physical act of wearing the mask and congregating or some other in one of these four sections, correct?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Very similar. And your officers, do they have any problem enforcing criminal possession of a weapon?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: No, sir.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So wouldn't one reason that they would have no problem then enforcing this very similar legislation?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct. I may elaborate, that same cost

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out that comes up with that same gun, we don't automatically arrest him. We find out, Hey, you a licensed pistol holder? Are you an off duty police officer? Are you retired? And obviously that would show that he is legally in possession. So that person that is wearing that mask, do you have a medical condition. Is there a religious reason why you wear this mask? And then those questions would then bring us to the point where are they either going to arrest or let them go.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: My point is, and tell me if you agree, if we were to use the standard that some have suggested where the police can't -- they have to determine the intent. That can't be legal, then all of the criminal laws in the state of New York would likely be thrown out.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: All those with the capacity to have intent.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I want to just reiterate, and you brought it up a few

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times. We talk about experience and using experience in real life. We saw firsthand how our police department dealt with the protests back in 2020 virtually flawlessly. I commend you, I commend our entire Department, the best in the country, I believe. And you dealt with it then, and nobody should have any doubt. Nobody should have any doubt that this bill, if passed, would be used in any type of negative way, because you've proved under your leadership and the men and women of our police force that that would never happen. So thank you.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Solages.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Good afternoon, Commissioner. How are you doing today?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good afternoon, sir.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Nice to see you, sir. Can you please share with this Body, which is a professional Body, any

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data that shows the past year the number of crimes that were committed with crimes -- misdemeanor or felonies or violations with masks.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: With mask you mean?

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: I do not have that in front of me, sir. I can get you that data.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Okay. But we're going to make a very important decision today that affects constitutional rights for all of our county. There's no information, no data that you can provide to this Body for us to rely upon?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: No. That's not correct, sir. You asked me to provide data that's related to those who committed a crime wore a mask.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: I don't have that. But I can get you that. No problem. But that's not the same as what we're

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talking about. This, in fact, by itself, stand alone is a crime, an unclassified misdemeanor. This crime of a bank robbery for argument's sake, is a crime. Wearing a mask, it's just a contributing factor to that crime. So I don't have that. But I can get it for you.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood. But we have many people here who are speaking from personal experience, and I take it at face value. I must also rely upon data that's organized that shows, perhaps a tendency or trends, if the crimes in Nassau County in which people are wearing a mask is on the rise, then I would really appreciate that information in order to make a decision today.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: I will get you that. I know there was a bank robbery last week and the individual that was robbed was robbed by two people wearing masks.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood.  
Thank you. I would really appreciate that

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information.

Furthermore, Commissioner, there is no provision here in this bill that states that if the number of cases of Covid in Nassau County increased exponentially, that there would be some sort of discretion by the police officers to not enforce. Being the head officer of the police department, and I appreciate you for your hard work, will the officers be using their discretion in situations if the number of Covid cases in Nassau County go through the roof like they did two years ago?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: One hundred percent. The key word you use is discretion. Discretion is used all the time by my officers. There were many times that when it comes to a vehicle in traffic, stop a field stop on a street, or even a low level minor arrest, discretion is always used and the officer has that ability to do that.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood,

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sir.

So if an individual -- if Covid, numbers go up, we have an individual who's in the car alone, so he's not even in the car with other people. I see it all the time, people driving in the car and they have their mask on, the windows closed. I'm like, okay, but I understand why. I respect their choice. But if one of your fine police officers happens to see a person driving alone with a mask in their car. Is that sufficient probable cause? And they're driving in a neighborhood and there's a person that makes a call saying, hey, there's a suspicious car. Is that sufficient probable cause for one of your officers to make an arrest.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: My officers would not make that car stop. We pass people all the time wearing an N95 or a surgical mask. We're not going to stop those individuals. We're talking, basically, this tool becomes the value in



1  
2 protest, it becomes the value in high  
3 crime areas. It becomes the value in when  
4 we're seeing an uptick in violence and  
5 that those people being described during  
6 those crimes are wearing masks. That is  
7 something that gives my cop that extra  
8 advantage on that stop. But again,  
9 respectfully, it starts off with that  
10 common law right of inquiry. Wearing that  
11 straight up is not what we're going to  
12 jump out and put in handcuffs. Wearing  
13 that ski mask, running from the scene of  
14 a of a crime, you're going to get stopped  
15 and my cop will use his discretion and  
16 his investigative abilities to determine  
17 if that subject is the subject that  
18 committed the crime.

19 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you,  
20 Commissioner.

21 My last question. Every year at our  
22 budget hearings, I have asked you every  
23 year, regarding the arrest ratio between  
24 black males and white males in Nassau  
25 County. As you know, sir, we discussed

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2 this every year. The arrest ratio of  
3 black male to white males in Nassau  
4 County is 5 to 1. I've asked you before  
5 many times, why is that the case? And you  
6 said it could be possibly because  
7 individuals from Queens or elsewhere  
8 committed the crimes. Because the  
9 population of African-American males in  
10 Nassau County is at most 12%, but they  
11 represent more than 20% of people we see  
12 in our courts or being arrested. So what  
13 I'm asking you, Commissioner, is whether  
14 this tool by your officers, which you  
15 said it will enable them to be better  
16 crime solvers and detectives, will this  
17 tool increase that ratio or decrease that  
18 ratio? And just for the record, sir, it's  
19 not just amongst black males and white  
20 men and also for Latino males and white  
21 males. The arrest ratio is 5 to 1.

22 COMMISSIONER RYDER: So there has  
23 been no more, never in history of this  
24 department, such engagement regarding the  
25 demographics of a county that it is now.

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We are on top of everything that gets done. Everything is tracked in numbers. That's why you get the numbers that you see. Numbers are always something that's looked at and are a concern. The question becomes why, who, where, when. When you look at the areas where crimes occur in Nassau County, Green Acres Mall, Roosevelt Field are the top two areas in Nassau County. And when you look at it, then out of that, I think the number is off top of my head, I believe it's 40% are New York City residents, not here. So when I compare this number to the demographics in this county, the residents don't live in this county that are committing 35 or 40% of this crime. Why am I not using the other 8 million people that live in the City of New York? And I get that too. That wouldn't be a true analysis either. All my arrests are based on probable cause. Will this wearing a mask do it? I will know every single stop that gets done because it's

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recorded on body camera. I know every single stop that gets done because it goes into our track system, and we now can give you the numbers, exactly what you're asking.

And every single day we discuss demographics in the county and arrests, field stops and tickets and this report that's just been out and it is posted now you can take a look at it, you will see a dramatic change in someone's activity in Nassau County. You will not see a great change in arrests. And again I go by, 58% of the people of those that are arrested are by someone calling 911. They call for help. I went there, right, I didn't go. There is, I think 15 or 16% are self-initiated, but most of them are self-initiated stops again at Roosevelt Field and Green Acres, the two top areas. So I'd love to give you a simple mathematical answer that fits, but it doesn't fit that easy. But I will tell you this nobody is more engaged with

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demographics than I am and my administrative staff. And we have these hard conversations every single day and making adjustments to make it better.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you, Commissioner.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Mullaney.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Thank you Commissioner. I would actually argue this law doesn't make your job harder, actually, we might make your a job harder.

Two things. One, this is just a tool in the toolbox, right?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is 100% correct.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: I apologize. I mean, you're a cop. How many years? 40 plus years on?

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Forty one years, sir.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Forty one

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2 years. I know from just being a civil  
3 servant myself, I implicitly trust  
4 somebody who's got 42 years on the job  
5 and who's been in your position for as  
6 long as you have. You have police reform  
7 laws, right? Body cameras, you just said  
8 it yourself. Instead of reporting public  
9 sessions with the public, different types  
10 of training, compliance reporting, your  
11 cops are held accountable. We keep using  
12 words like content, reasonable suspicion,  
13 discretion, probable cause. It's just a  
14 way for you to approach somebody in case  
15 one of your officers -- I know I can  
16 speak for myself when I say I trust the  
17 Nassau County Police Department.

18 As an aside, three weeks ago, we had  
19 Committees, Public Safety Committee met  
20 to discuss this. Our counsel made  
21 amendments to that law and pass it along  
22 to a Minority with absolutely no  
23 response. Today a law was sent back our  
24 way. That's three weeks time to discuss  
25 it. Not in front of the Police

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Commissioner today. So I think it should move forward with the law. I think we can stand up here and we can question cops intent and question whether or not they have the ability to do this, but not at the same time when we're going to ask them to come up and take a picture with us, they have to be praised them for what they just did earlier today. So it's got to be one or the other. Are we going to award them with Top Cop ceremonies and then trust them to do their jobs, or we're not going to take pictures with them and then hold them over the fire and question their every move.

Again, the question is less for you, more just, thank you for what you're doing. And again, it's just a tool in the toolbox. This isn't a weapon. You're not going to weaponize this against people. It's just a way for you to do your job a little bit better.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: So we also get the ability to stand here and take that

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recognition. This is the one of the most selfless jobs you can do. We get the rewards, we get the recognition. But it's horrible when we have to see the death and we have to see the carnage that comes with it. But at the end of the day, we stand here and I always start off by saying thank you. I can't do my job without the support of the Legislators, and it's all of the Legislators. And I always say that. All of them. They back up the Police Department, they give us the tools. We're in a fight right now that I'll say it again, you are going to see the most violent political season that you've ever seen in the history of this country. We already know the Intel. We see what's going on in the world, both internationally and locally, and it's a concern, and we are doing our best to stay on top of it. Anytime I can get a tool to keep everybody safe and I mean everybody, I'm going to take advantage of that tool. And that's why I'm fighting.



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Stating the way I'm stating it today is my cops will be professional. My cops will remain professional. And they will live by that model that we go by: Loyalty, integrity, fairness and excellence. Not to each other, but to the community.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you, Commissioner.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: I have to follow up with one question.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. Minority Leader.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON: Commissioner, I just want to explain something with this law. And I know you read it, but we really went over it with a lot of judicial people that are concerned about it.

Basically, what this law is saying now is that if there's someone with a mask on and they're observing even a demonstration and, and they're just observing it, but they happen to have a

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mask on, this law is basically saying that they can be charged with a misdemeanor. I mean, that's basically what it's saying. Now, I trust you, I trust your police, but you're putting your police officers in a difficult situation because if the people there say, well, you have to arrest that person, they have a mask on, even if they're just quietly watching a group of people, doesn't have to be a protest. We're putting them, I just feel -- you know how -- I have police in my family. You know that. I'm thinking of them right now. I think it's putting them in a very precarious situation. And again, it's not as if there's someone wearing a mask and throwing rocks. Throwing the rocks at the problem, which is a crime. So yes, they can be arrested. And the fact that they have a mask on, in my opinion, should escalate that charge. But if someone's just sitting and that's what's written in this law, this law says if

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2           you're just watching, if you're just  
3           sitting there with a mask on, they could  
4           be charged with a misdemeanor. Just that  
5           sense. Not to mention if a police officer  
6           goes up again and asks someone, why are  
7           you wearing a mask? You are you sick? Or  
8           do you have an old person at home or  
9           whatever? If they start asking questions  
10          and I'm sure they would do it  
11          professionally, that in itself, without  
12          any other crime happening, is against the  
13          First Amendment. That's going to cause a  
14          lot of problems for the police officers.  
15          This law, in my opinion, is putting them  
16          in a very awkward situation. And that is  
17          what I've heard. And that is a genuine  
18          concern.

19                 And again, we can fix some of these  
20                 things. We can fix it. The Presiding  
21                 Officer saying I am running in circles.  
22                 Meanwhile, what I'm saying is something  
23                 that I don't know if you've thought  
24                 about, which is just observing a crowd.  
25                 That is in this law.

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So again, we agree with the premise that someone should not wear a mask if they're committing a crime or doing something or harassing anyone. We totally agree with that. But this law is going to put our police officers, I think, in a precarious situation on a number of different levels, and we can fix it.

So I know it's going to pass and believe me, they're not going to reconsider it ever again until it gets thrown out of court. And then we're going to have to pay for the legal fees. There's no doubt. And again, just the fact that it doesn't describe what a mask is, it's going to throw this out of court. So, you know, it's just a waste of everyone's time where we could really do it the right way and we could do it in the sense that protects the police officers, too.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Presiding Officer, can I make a statement?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator

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Strauss.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Commissioner  
Ryder, I wish I had a police commissioner  
like you when I was a cop.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: If anybody  
stands behind this police officers, it's  
you, and I'm sure they appreciate it. I  
know that you have an open dialog with  
your police officers, with your unions,  
and that is incredibly commendable.

Aside from protests, this law will  
allow our police officers to interact  
with someone and hopefully identify  
someone who's walking down the street in  
a neighborhood where our packages are  
being taken from our front porches, from  
where our car doors are being lifted,  
opened and stolen, and the items inside  
stolen. It'll allow a police officer,  
hopefully, to identify someone who is in  
a neighborhood where there's a prevalence  
of burglaries have been committed, where  
previously they don't have that option.

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So hopefully, this law will pass and, hopefully, it will be administered properly. And there's no doubt that it will be because you have one of the best trained police departments there are. And your police officers are highly trained, highly dedicated. They know when to use and implement and enforce laws because of the discretion that they're allowed to use.

There's no doubt in my mind that this law, if passed, will give you and your officers the tools needed to make all of us safer aside from protests. From the everyday crimes that are going on here, hopefully they'll reduce even more than 15% this year.

Congratulations, Commissioner, on the job and your officers as well. Kudos to you.

(Whereupon, applause.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL:

Commissioner, thank you.

Also let me congratulate you and

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your officers on on the tremendous help that they've rendered here today, here in the room. I appreciate that.

COMMISSIONER RYDER: They're doing their job.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: They're doing their job. They certainly are.

We have somebody here from the County Attorney's Office.

(Whereupon, applause.)

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Can you state your name?

MR. HARDIMAN: Kevin Hardiman from the County Attorney's Office.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thanks for coming. Starting out by saying, I understand the benefit of modifying the law that was on the books prior to 2020. And and re-implementing it, we needed to address it. Because as I read the law previously, there were no carve outs that protected individuals who wanted to wear medical grade masks. Do you agree with

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that?

MR. HARDIMAN: That's correct.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay. As somebody who has a history here in county where we want to protect everybody and we want to make sure that everyone has equal protection under the law. And we want to make sure that in this current state that we're living in, that the issues that have been brought forward here today, illustrated and discussed by Mazi Pilip, that we're protecting against.

I also, as somebody who, is of the Black American community, enjoy the protections of the law that would not allow the Proud Boys or the KKK to rise and wear hoods. So I am in agreement that we need to look at this. And as a breast cancer survivor who apparently broke the law back in 2004 when I became neutropenic and my immune system was shot and I had to wear a mask, I had to wear a mask to go to the store. I had to wear a mask to go to work. So I appreciate the



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spirit of the law that my colleagues have introduced, and I support the law that my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus have submitted.

I have questions. There's some gray areas here that maybe you can answer today that would help you with the law proposed by my colleagues in the Republican caucus.

So if we look at B1 in this wall, it says, "people who remain or congregate in a public place with other persons so masked or disguised knowingly permits or aides persons who are masked or disguised to congregate in a public place". So is that specifically if someone, the way I understand this is that if people in a group have a masked home and they're standing around, that they could be in violation of that law; is that accurate?

MR. HARDIMAN: Well, I think what it actually accomplishes that had been the law for well over 100 years, is that that lines up very well with the loitering law

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that existed previously. That law used to say a person was guilty of loitering when being masked or in a manner, any manner disguised by unusual or unnatural, attire or facial alteration, loiters, remains or congregates in a public place with other persons so masked or disguised, or knowingly permits or aids persons to mask or disguised to congregate in a public place, except that such conduct is not unlawful when it occurs in connection with a masquerade party or like entertainment. If when such entertainment is held in a city which has regulations in connection with such affairs, permission is first obtained from the police or other appropriate authorities". So that was the original law that was repealed in 2020, in the face of Covid. Back then it was not allowed to wear a mask just for health reasons or that sort of thing. That's what the provision was. So this one carries that forward and then creates the

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other three limitations on where this law will apply.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: The question that I asked, was regarding the provision one in Section B of the current law, that was it's currently being vetted on the floor today. It says that if someone remains or congregates in a public space with other persons so masked or disguised or knowingly permits or aids persons so masked or disguised to congregate in a public place, that they would be in violation of this law, and that there would be a misdemeanor that could be brought against them with a \$1,000 fine. Can you describe for me situations like outside of a protest that this could occur?

MR. HARDIMAN: Well, I can't get into all of the potential aspects of it.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm just asking to describe one.

MR. HARDIMAN: What I'm saying is that this law was on the books and was --

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this particular type of provision was on the books for over 100 years and was upheld in the Second Circuit, as well as in the First Department and was found to be constitutional. So the phrasing in that particular subsection actually lines up very well with the law that had already been on the books for a long time and found to be constitutional.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So this particular law goes beyond what was on the books before, because now it's a misdemeanor with the \$1,000 fine and a one year potential jail time. So in looking at this, this is different. It's not exactly what was on the books before. Because it's carrying jail time. It's carrying a higher penalty, in terms of, financial penalty and a actual misdemeanor on one's criminal record.

MR. HARDIMAN: Under this law, it would be punishable -- not punished, but punishable -- by a fine up to \$1,000, or imprisonment of not more than one year.

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So, potentially someone could be held accountable and held to a misdemeanor and punished by up to a year in jail.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Yeah. And so that's that would be an exposure to not only a group of people who, based on the vague language in this could be a family traveling together. Could be a group of students traveling together, protecting one another from any type of illness one might be carrying, whether it's Covid, the flu, whatever it is, or just protecting folks who they might have to go home to and living in multigenerational housing. So the vagueness in this bill is what is concerning because it also then ties into some other things. And I want to walk through one through four with you. But I just wanted to address the vagueness in this bill. It's a group of people congregating together. Then it goes further to say that the person who might be holding an event, based on this, it

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2 could be a barbecue in the park -- in  
3 fact, I went to church yesterday and I  
4 started looking around in the crowd, and  
5 probably for every five people in the  
6 crowd, one person was wearing a mask. So  
7 in this case, it says if you aid persons  
8 in wearing a mask and congregating in a  
9 public place. So I know for a fact the  
10 churches go down to the beach, they go in  
11 different places and they have these  
12 church services. This would actually  
13 qualify as a breach of this law based on  
14 its meaning.

15 But I'll go on to number two, which  
16 then talks about interfering with other  
17 people's right to exercise their secured  
18 protections under the federal, state and  
19 local laws. That clearly would be in the  
20 case of a demonstration, am I correct, or  
21 a protest?

22 MR. HARDIMAN: Well, I'm not quite  
23 sure what you're referencing within this.

24 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm referencing  
25 number two in section B. Do you have the

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law in front of you?

MR. HARDIMAN: Right. Subsection 2 says again that acts with the intent by force or threaten or force to injure, intimidate or interfere with any person because of the person's exercise of any rights secured by federal, state or local law, or to intimidate such person or any other person or any class of persons from exercising any right --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I don't need you to read it to me. I asked the question.

MR. HARDIMAN: It says what the law is.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That's fine. I'm asking a question. That actually can be then tied specifically to rallies, whether they be for religious reasons, political reasons or the like, correct?

MR. HARDIMAN: It could be at such an event if the intent of by force or threat of force to injure, intimidate or --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I got that, yes.

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So that sounds like, specifically, because of these protections of rights for under the federal, state and local laws, those look like rights that are baked into other laws and constitutional rights. And so I'm trying to understand the distinction between 1 and 2. Because 1 is so vague that it's not tied to any activity. It's just saying anybody that is standing together with a mask.

MR. HARDIMAN: What I will say is that the ones who are in the best position to explain the intent of what the law was would be the drafters, and that would be the Majority and not the County Attorney's Office, but in terms of the terms that are laid out here in the law. That seems to be fine.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Did the County Attorney's Office review this to determine that it's constitutionally sound and what the legislative intent was?

MR. HARDIMAN: We did not determine



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what the alleged legislative intent was.  
We did review it and found it to be  
constitutional in its drafting and  
consistent with New York state.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So you're here  
today, you're supposed to be the expert  
that's going to answer these questions,  
but you're saying you can't answer number  
one.

MR. HARDIMAN: That I can't answer  
number one.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: You can't answer  
to number one, because I'm asking you  
what distinguishes between --

MR. HARDIMAN: What I am saying is  
is that these are the four exceptions  
that were laid out. The provisions shall  
apply only if the person does one of  
these four things. Which is more clearly  
laid out as to what they wanted to  
accomplish here in the law.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So I'm asking  
what they want to accomplish and you  
can't answer it. So maybe someone from

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the majority should do it.

What was the intent for Section B, number 1? Because I understand what B number 2 is. B number 2 is clearly tied to protests and rallies. Number 1 is so vague, it could mean people traveling together on a train that are masked. It could mean folks going to church masked. It could mean the owner of a private business that allows people to be in a space masked.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Once you're done here, perhaps, we will have some answers.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Maybe you will have some answers? That gets really to the crux of what I'm trying to understand here today.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: If it's okay with you, Legislator Ferretti would like to answer you. That's up to you.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: This gentleman was purported to be in this space to answer the question. So let me ask him

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one other question before Ferretti has an opportunity to respond.

So and let's go back to A in the paragraph just above B, where they say that people cannot come into private property wearing face coverings without the consent of the owner or tenant. So that means I can't go into a store wearing a face mask without the owner or the person renting the space giving me the expressed --

MR. HARDIMAN: So what I can say is that Subsection A is further defined by Subsection B, where it says that it shall only apply in these circumstances that are laid out in B.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Then that's perfect. So then that says that I walk into the store with my family and we're all wearing masks. I did not get the express consent of the owner, and now we're in Section B1 and I'm in there with mask on. Am I in violation of this of this provision thereby now subject to

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\$1000 fine, to a year in jail and a misdemeanor?

MR. HARDIMAN: If it fits within the terms of this contract. You're laying out a hypothetical, and I can't answer hypotheticals. The hypothetical as laid out is dependent on in certain circumstances where it would fall within that.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That's the gray area, right? I walk in the store, I have the mask on. I don't have the expressed approval of the owner of the store. And I walk in with my family and we're walking through the store, I am in violation of this law, and/or the store owner then could be in violation because they allowed me to come in with a group of people masked. That's how I read this. And I'm asking you if I'm not reading it correctly, then help me to understand it.

MR. HARDIMAN: Again, I would just say that that's something that they would have to determine in the court. I do

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2 think that in terms of how it compares to  
3 the prior law as much as what you had  
4 previously stated, you had gone back in  
5 whatever year it was wearing a mask for  
6 not a masquerade party you were  
7 technically in violation of the law that  
8 existed at that time.

9 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Who knew?

10 MR. HARDIMAN: And given that law,  
11 that law was reviewed in the Second  
12 Circuit and in the First Department, and  
13 it was found to be constitutional. And on  
14 that basis, the review of this law was  
15 determined to be that would fall into the  
16 realm of constitutional. That section  
17 that you were referencing is very similar  
18 to what had previously been in the law.

19 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: But now the  
20 difference is now there's an exemption  
21 for people to wear face coverings for  
22 medical reasons. That did not exist under  
23 the previous law. So that's why in its  
24 current form, without targeting specific  
25 activities or actions tied to me walking

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into a store with the mask on with my family, based on this, I could be prosecuted.

MR. HARDIMAN: If what you were doing in coming into that store would fit within one of the four subsections that says it shall apply to.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Yeah, that's that's why I do think that having a bill that's targeted, which would act as a deterrent, just like many other laws that are on the books that would then enhance the prosecution is a more targeted approach. It's similar to the Leandra Law that if somebody is drinking and driving and they have a child in the car, it escalates and it becomes a higher penalty of law. And that's to deter the behavior of driving under the influence and more importantly, driving under the influence with a child in the vehicle.

I just think that there's some gray areas here. We all want to get to the same place. But I do think that it

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leaves certain communities exposed, and there's no refuting that certain communities had a disproportional response and affect by Covid. Is not in any way disputable that certain communities and certain people within our population were affected because they have higher rates of chronic illness. It's undisputable that certain populations within this county also live in multigenerational housing. So they are at a higher rate using masks for the purpose of not only protecting themselves, but protecting their loved ones. And it wouldn't be uncommon to see that same family multigenerational, wearing masks for that express purpose and I think number one, without a specific target leaves people susceptible to having to be either fearful of wearing a mask and chilling the effect of the purpose and the benefit of wearing a mask. And I'm concerned about that. I think we should tighten it up. Tighten it

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up.

The police commissioner made it clear that he needs time to train his officers properly so that we can effectively implement the law. And I think we could use that time to implement training based on the law, and I think we could use that time that he can ready himself so that we can better target what specific behaviors we're trying to deter.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: You were asked a few minutes ago with regard to Section 3A and B specifically Subsection B1, if there were any examples you could give other than -- I don't want to misquote you, legislator, I think you said other than a protest.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm sorry? I didn't realize that you were -- sorry.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: You had asked them for examples other than a protest



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where Section B1 would apply.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So B1 doesn't seem to be tied to a protest. It's just kind of out there. B2 appears to tie to a protest.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. So you were asking for other examples.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I was asking for examples, and I was also asking whether the scenario that I stated on the record would, in fact, be in violation of number 1.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Understood. So my question, sir. Would a KKK rally fit under this section?

MR. HARDIMAN: Presumably so, yes.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay, so then if members of the KKK rally with white facial or any color facial coverings, that would be that would fall under this, correct?

MR. HARDIMAN: It would.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. What about Proud Boys rallies. Would that fall

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under this?

MR. HARDIMAN: If they're wearing a mask.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. Because if they have the intent to conceal their identity and they're congregating, correct?

MR. HARDIMAN: Yes, it would appear.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. How about recently when Hofstra University held its graduation and five males masked their face and walked in and started stabbing people, would that example fall under this legislation when the police would have a tool in their holster to act?

MR. HARDIMAN: I believe so, yes.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. So I think that goes to the heart of the two pieces of legislation. In that example at Hofstra University, this legislation, this legislation is proactive rather than reactive, correct?

MR. HARDIMAN: I accept your

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statement, sure.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you. So let's be clear, we don't want masked people running around here that belong to the KKK, who belong to the Proud Boys, who belong to a group of people who would harass individuals who are coming together in the interest of rallying in support of any religious, whether it be our Jewish community, whether it be the Protestants, the Catholics, we don't want that, right? We don't want people seeking to hurt individuals or -- Presiding Officer, just trying to establish quorum. Speaking to the gentleman who just answered and you're speaking to him as well. Thank you -- So at the end of the day, we want to get to the same place. So to start talking about parsing out the KKK -- I think the KKK, I think

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anti-Israel protesters and all of them fall under number 2. I'm saying number 1 is doesn't have any clear direction or target to which there are attempting to change behavior or deter behavior. That's what I'm saying about number 1.

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And I would just respond, my interpretation is number 1 would be dealing with the KKK rallies. Number 2 would be dealing with the Hofstra people.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: The Hofstra people were criminals who went there with the express purpose of committing a crime. They went there -- and listen, I don't want them at my door taking my Amazon package no more than I want them at any social event to be able to wear a mask. And that's why, honestly, I also say we're doing us ourselves a disservice by not clearly defining what a mask is. We should define what a mask is, that where it would be appropriate to wear a

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2 medically graded surgical mask, or we  
3 should be targeting what that looks like,  
4 because in your case, you're allowing  
5 masks to be something that -- I just saw  
6 a young man riding an e-scooter, and he  
7 had, on a whole, Spiderman. I didn't feel  
8 very comfortable with that. But under  
9 the law that existed before 2020, he  
10 wouldn't have been able to do that. And  
11 it sounds like you would not have been  
12 able to wear a Spider-Man's on Halloween,  
13 right? That law prohibited that. And I  
14 understand that we want to make sure that  
15 we don't have people doing the smash and  
16 grabs. I understand we want to get  
17 someplace that deters crime. And I think  
18 our bill does that. It deters crime by  
19 targeting criminals and not citizens?

20 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator  
21 Solages.

22 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you,  
23 Presiding Officer. Good afternoon, sir.  
24 I can direct you to Section 3B, part two  
25 acts with the intent by force or threat

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of force to injure, intimidate, or interfere with any person because of any persons exercising of any rights secured by federal, state and local law to intimidate such person or any person. Before, with my colleagues, Legislator Ferretti and Legislator Bynoe, you afforded them the opportunity to -- they gave you situations and you said whether or not this law would address that situation. So I was present in many of the Black Lives Matter protests in the past two years that benefited our society. That actually led to improvements in our civil rights. For example, body cameras, because of those rallies and those protests. Now, during those protests, I would witness one group on the side of Black Lives Matter protesters. And then on the other side, Blue Lives Matter protesters and each group would be shouting things at each other. Is this section designed to address that?

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MR. HARDIMAN: Shouting or -- I mean, I'm not sure --

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Well, you know, one can say harassment. One can say intimidating. You know, they're yelling different things at each other from different sides of the street. Of course, we had our Nassau County Police Department there breaking it up, but they were saying such unfavorable things to each other. In that situation, can this law be applied?

MR. HARDIMAN: Depending on whether the circumstances met within the defined terms or the set forth terms here.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: So this can be used to not just address protesters but also counter-protesters?

MR. HARDIMAN: If there's intent to by force or threat of force to injure, intimidate, etc., as it's laid out here, you would have to meet the criteria set forth here. That's why it's a hypothetical that I can't speak to as to

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whether those circumstances would have met with the terms of this particular law.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood. But. Were you the the same office that drafted the transgender bill that prohibited transgender persons from, playing on county fields? Were you part of that?

MR. HARDIMAN: I was not a meaningful part of it, no.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: But did you were you aware of it; is that correct?

MR. HARDIMAN: I was aware of it.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: And did you foresee that that bill would be overturned by a Republican judge, Francis Ricigliano?

MR. HARDIMAN: I can't speak to that particular law. I was not a part of preparing that law.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Do you reasonably foresee this as being overturned by a judge who sees this as



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vague and arbitrary?

MR. HARDIMAN: This mask law?

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes, sir.

MR. HARDIMAN: I do not. I do not.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: The other scenario that was described a scenario in private sectors, the police commissioner talked about Greenacres Mall was a field being the two high crime areas in Nassau County. I was recently at Roosevelt Field, getting my nails done right at that nail place right between Macy's and the parking lot. And it's a great nail place, by the way. My lady wanted to go and I went with her. And while I was sitting there, you can see everybody coming into the mall. And I literally saw 20 young black men wearing ski masks entering the mall. And they were not committing any crimes. They were in a group of 20. They were wearing a full non-surgical mask, ski mask. Apparently as part of the style. If you don't believe me, go to one of the top ten

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2 songs in the country right now, Bryson  
3 Tiller, "Whatever she wants" and you'll  
4 see in the video they're going into high  
5 end stores, Gucci, wearing full ski mask.  
6 Now, for some people, that might create  
7 fear. For me I was like, oh, it looks  
8 like Tyrone from Elmont. Didn't create  
9 fear for me. But for some others, that  
10 may create fear. Under that fact pattern,  
11 sir, would these individuals, these young  
12 men, probably 16, 17, 18. Would they be  
13 found liable for breaking this law.

14 MR. HARDIMAN: I wouldn't be able to  
15 tell you whether they be found liable or  
16 not, or whether they would be arrested  
17 for doing so. That would be left to the  
18 police department to go about enforcing,  
19 if they felt that it met the terms of  
20 this law.

21 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood.  
22 Thank you very much.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mr.  
24 Hardiman, thank you. Will you get back  
25 to counsel for the Majority and the

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Minority on your assessment of Minority's bill that was filed this morning?

MR. HARDIMAN: Yes, we can review that. We got it around Noon time today.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: So thank you for your help on everybody.

I know there are a lot of people who are waiting to speak on this, but we have to have mercy on our court reporter. She needs a few minutes because her fingers are falling off and some people may need the restroom, etc., so we'll do a very short break. Ten minutes and then and then we will commence with public comment.

(Whereupon, recess.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, everyone, please have a seat. We're going back on the record.

We're going to start with public comment. Now, let me just tell you that for the most part, I don't know who is in support of the bill and who is against the bill. So don't question me about you

1  
2 have too many for one side coming in a  
3 row. I'm just going to call them in the  
4 order that I have them. So I don't know  
5 who's for it, who's against it. Once  
6 again, the speakers are limited to three  
7 minutes. We'll start with Rebecca  
8 Sassouni.

9 MS. SASSOUNI: Good afternoon. Can  
10 you hear me? I appreciate this  
11 opportunity. My name is Rebecca Sassouni.  
12 I'm here to speak in support of  
13 Legislator Pilip, as a person, as a  
14 friend, but also as a fellow elected  
15 official. I happen to be a mother of  
16 four, a former president of Sephardic  
17 Heritage Alliance, which is an  
18 organization dedicated to the  
19 acculturated needs of Iranian American  
20 Jews, primarily in Great Neck, but also  
21 across the New York region. I am a  
22 graduate of Columbia University. I'm a  
23 lawyer and I'm an unpaid elected public  
24 official. I am a school board trustee and  
25 I was "privileged" to be the president of

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a board of education during the Covid pandemic. And I would like to share with you some of my lived experiences as a brown Jew during the mask pandemic, the Covid pandemic, and my impressions of the intersection between law and civil liberties during the pandemic, because I think they pertain.

During the pandemic, elected officials such as yourselves and myself and other members of boards of education had to follow the law; so we did. We were told that for the sake of public health, everyone had to wear masks; so we did. We implemented the mask mandate. But we also had to follow other laws because the laws of civil liberties and the laws of the United States Constitution and Title VI pertain, and they still do.

So during the pandemic and since I and other members of my family and my friends while following the law, wore masks and attended here in Nassau County and in New York City and in other

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environs, all kinds of peaceful public protests. I and my children, my four children, attended peaceful protests with permits for black lives and for LGBTQ+ lives and for Asian lives. And I did so with my family and with my friends because I believed -- and I left out for Blue Lives -- and I did so gratefully as an American in support of all of those lives, thinking that as a Jew in the United States of America who knew my rights along with my friends and family, that the Constitution of the United States of America protected me as well, and my family and my friends and my children's lives. When the mask mandate stopped, I thought (buzzer) that I could take away my mask and that I could go ahead and --

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: You're going to have to wrap up.

MS. SASSOUNI: I thought that that would be okay, and that we could continue to rely on the laws of this country to

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protect us. October 7th occurred, and my children and their friends learned that there was no reciprocity. They quickly learned at school that they would be bad, that they would be bashed as Jews.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm sorry. You're not paying attention. We have three minute limit. I'm sorry. If we if you go for ten minutes, then other people are going to have to stay here all night. Please finish your finish up now.

MS. SASSOUNI: Thank you. Jews have learned very quickly, particularly young Jews, that they have not been given any reciprocity, that we have been bashed, that we have been intimidated by masked people all around. And Ms. Pilips proposed legislation will protect Jews and others, as we should be by title six and by the Constitution that protects all Americans, and it will enable law enforcement too to be protected. Thank you very much. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Again,

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this is going to apply to both sides. I'm in favor of this legislation, but I'm not going to favor or allow people to go more than three minutes. It's not right. It's not fair. We have another hearing coming after this. Many people are waiting. Okay. There's a timer right here. Please watch it.

William Transer.

MR. TRANSER: My name is William Transer. I'm a staff attorney Disability Rights New York. I've already provided this comment to the clerk, so you guys should have received a written version of this, but I'm going to resuscitate it to all of you here today.

DRNY submits the following in opposition to Nassau County's proposed bill one 4224 banning mask wearing in public and private places. A mask ban in Nassau County will overwhelmingly target people with disabilities who use masks to manage their disability and medical needs. The Nassau County Legislature must



1  
2 reject this bill to avoid predictable  
3 discrimination and physical and mental  
4 harm against many people in the  
5 disability community. DRNY is the  
6 protection and advocacy system for people  
7 with disabilities in New York State, and  
8 we work to empower, protect and advance  
9 the rights of individuals with  
10 disabilities. DRNY provides legal  
11 assistance and direct advocacy to people  
12 with disabilities throughout the state of  
13 New York, including individuals with  
14 disabilities who need personal protective  
15 equipment (PPE) to participate in  
16 community life. We remain committed to  
17 advocating for an accessible community  
18 where people with disabilities are not  
19 segregated, isolated or unnecessarily  
20 institutionalized.

21 A mask ban law in Nassau County will  
22 be yet another discriminatory barrier for  
23 people with disabilities, who will be  
24 excluded from actively participating in  
25 community life. People with disabilities,

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their families, friends, colleagues and caregivers have a right to use PPE such as masks so that they can participate in community life without the risk of illness, injury, or death.

A mask ban places people with disabilities and their families at greater risk of contracting Covid 19 and other infectious diseases at a time in New York State when Covid 19 infections are on the rise. Reducing the spread of diseases in the community by wearing masks is beneficial to everybody and prevents great risk to people with disabilities.

While this bill permits people to wear masks to protect their health, it fails to acknowledge that it is impossible to decipher who is wearing a mask for health reasons or not. Many people with non apparent disabilities require masks to participate in public programs, receive government services, and go to business open to the public.

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This bill permits untrained officers to rely on stereotypes and bias, to guess who may or may not have a disability or health condition, leading to the inevitable result of discrimination against people with disabilities.

Peaceful civil disobedience is a time honored way to fight for equal rights, and people with disabilities have a long history of engaging in free speech activities by organizing and advocating for justice and equality. This bill would subject people who require masking for their health to risk discrimination, arrest, and detention simply by exercising their rights in public and private spaces.

So this is why Disability Rights New York's ask you all to vote no on the proposed bill today. And if anybody has any further questions or wants any clarity from Disability Rights New York, feel free to reach out to us through our regular channels and mail it to DRNY.org

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or call our number. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

(Whereupon, public  
interruption.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: The next  
one is Abigail Badarov.

MS. BADAROV: Hello, everyone. My  
name is Abby. I'm a rising junior in high  
school. I proudly stand before you as a  
voice for students across the globe who  
want to end the raging anti-Semitism that  
has been spread across college campuses.  
The past ten months have been sickening  
for Jewish students, and while I'm been  
fortunate to feel protected in my high  
school, many other students do not share  
this sense of safety. As a teenager  
preparing for college, I dream of an  
environment where I can freely express  
myself, advocate for my beliefs, and  
stand up against mistreatment without  
fear. The revolt to ban masks at protest  
is a crucial step towards this goal. When  
individuals wear masks at protests, it

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sends a clear message they are aware of the harmful nature of their actions and choose to hide their identities to avoid accountability. If someone is truly passionate about their cause, they should stand proudly and openly for what they believe in. Concealing one's identity suggests a recognition of wrongdoing and a desire to evade responsibility. By banning masks at protests, we send a powerful message that we expect individuals to take ownership of their actions and engage in respectful, peaceful advocacy.

I'm here today as a representative of the future generation. We must teach accountability, integrity, and the importance of standing up for what is right without resorting to anonymity. Let us create a safer, more respectful environment for all students where hate and fear have no place. Thank you for your time and consideration.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL Kathleen

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Downes.

MS. DOWNES: Good afternoon. My name is Kathleen Downes. I'm here today to speak in opposition to the proposed Nassau County mask ban. I am deeply concerned about ambiguous language prohibiting mask wearers from entering public or private property without owner consent. Listed exceptions are vague at best, and there are no clear guidelines for determining legitimate health related use. Those with health concerns should not have to prove their need to protect their own bodies in order to participate in public life, that is disclosure of private medical information to random people. Masking during even a brief encounter can be protective, as Covid can be transmitted within five seconds, according to a 2023 study. We currently have 17 million Americans suffering from long Covid, and I do not want to be one of them.

With police granted the power to

1  
2 determine who must unmask because they  
3 raise reasonable suspicion of intent to  
4 commit criminal activity, I fear  
5 inconsistent enforcement primarily  
6 impacting people of color who are also  
7 more likely to be disabled. The bill also  
8 threatens our right to safeguard our  
9 personal health based on poorly defined  
10 standards of suspicion. Worse, the bill  
11 invites police violence towards health  
12 conscious citizens who could be declared  
13 suspicious due to racial, religious and  
14 disability related biases.

15 According to the Center for American  
16 Progress, 50% of those killed by police  
17 are disabled. People congregate well  
18 masked for plenty of legitimate reasons,  
19 including people in cars with their home  
20 health aides, their day programs, with  
21 friends, with school groups. I feel that  
22 the Nassau mask ban also threatens the  
23 right to protest safely for Covid  
24 conscious citizens and anyone deemed  
25 suspicious, even if that suspicion is

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influenced by bias.

I respect the desire to keep everyone safe, but more than 90% of protesters in 2020 and 2023, 2024 have been peaceful, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. People with illnesses have just as much right to protest safely as others. I know we can maintain peace without a harmful mask ban. We have to be courageous, creative and work together. This is not the answer. We need to find a better solution. Public health and civil liberties depend on it. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Stephanie.  
Ben Shamol.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Vanessa.  
Tanari.

MS. TANARI: Thank you. Recently, pro Hamas demonstrators stationed themselves outside the Nova music Festival Exhibit in lower Manhattan. The



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demonstrators harassed and abused visitors who were entering and exiting the exhibit, including high school students from Nassau County who came to the exhibit to learn about the massacre and to honor the memory of those that were murdered. Imagine seeing images of hundreds of young people getting raped, dismembered, and slaughtered at a music festival, only to come outside and see masked demonstrators waving Hezbollah flags, holding banners and yelling statements such as, "Fuck Israel", "death to Zionists" and "long live October 7th". Manny Manzuri, whose two daughters were murdered at the Nova Festival, commented on the harassment: "I cannot find the words how it felt when somebody was shouting and supporting the people who murdered your daughters. It was like they killed me again and again and again".

The past several months saw a disturbing rise in anti-Semitic incidents across the world. In New York, this

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included one instance where a masked man terrorized Jews on the subway, ordering Zionists to leave. Imagine the fear. A person wearing a Star of David or a kippah, or reading a book with Hebrew writing must have felt on that subway car.

Two weeks ago, I partook in a rally in support of Israel and to free the hostages. My friends and I were harassed by a duo who yelled out, " Hamas, please take more hostages", as well as making obscene gestures and homophobic slurs. In every single one of the above episodes that I mentioned, the perpetrators of the acts of hate and intimidation were masked. In every single one of the episodes, a resident of Nassau County was on the receiving end of the acts of hate and harassment.

The Constitution does not give you the right to speech that contains threats or harassment. If a masked person is yelling out, "All Zionists must die"

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outside of a Jewish school or community center that is not protected speech. Masks and face coverings are being used to conceal identities and give anonymity to those who harass and encourage violence.

People who I know who live, work and raise families in Nassau County have been abused, intimidated, humiliated, threatened, physically assaulted and subject to racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic slurs.

I respectfully request that you pass this bill. In doing so, you are telling everyone who steps foot in Nassau County that terror and harassment won't be tolerated.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Michelle Aldoot.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Susan Gottherer.

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MS. GOTTHERER: Good afternoon. My name is Susan Gottherer. I'm the director of the Nassau County New York Civil Liberties Union. I'm here today to oppose the mask ban.

Let me start by saying again, just like last time, I had to do some digging for the amendment that's being Considered. And I actually had it in my hand given to me by one of your offices when another one of your offices told me that it was not written on paper and wasn't available and doesn't need to be posted publicly. So I think that this this Body better really think about the open public laws and open government laws because you're you're coming terribly close to violations.

This bill and its amendment, including an age restriction and seemingly adding limited principles, creates more questions than answers when trying to gather how and in what circumstances the law will be applied.

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1. It is unclear how law enforcement will determine that an individual is wearing a mask for one of the exceptions.

2. It is unclear how the exception in 3A on traffic stops would be applied or come into play, with the limiting elements established in the newly added 3B. Section 3B, subsection 1 sets out that the law is violated if someone knowingly permits or aids persons masked or disguised to congregate in a public place. But 3A seemingly requires that in order to violate the law, the individual themselves need to be masked. So it seems that if an unmasked person permits or aids in congregating, they would not be in violation. So there's a lot of confusion and vagaries here, let's just say, and I think the Legislator Bynoe covered a lot of those.

We would also ask what actions and by who would be perceived as actions that could reasonably lead to a proceeding. This open question is one that could be

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used to disproportionately target black and brown people, further requiring that the personal intent behind wearing a mask be known will require will regularly require a level of omniscience that is simply not possible. Again, this is too vague and there can't be any equal enforcement in this.

I also want to point out that the protests in Nassau County have been peaceful. And so again, evidence, please; evidence please, for the need for this. And can you imagine Police Commissioner Ryder's officers who have shepherded everybody through George Floyd protests and these protests now have to go in and start possibly escalating over a mask?

Not to mention also that there is a right to be anonymous. I'm sorry that it's upsetting for everybody, but constitutionally, NAACP versus Alabama, there is a right to be anonymous when you are protesting in this country. It is alarming to me how quickly everybody is

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ready to give up their constitutional rights.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Melinda Thaler.

MS. THALER: My name is Melinda Thaler. I'm with the End Jew Hatred Civil Rights Movement.

Protesters are claiming the need for masks for public health reasons, but for many of the claimants, there's a fake reasoning behind this. I brought some receipts. People seem to claim how difficult it is to divine intent. Here's the ACLU's website. How to defend against police surveillance at protests. Okay, there's no question as to what these people are trying to do. In plain English, they say on their website, you can read it, wear a mask to make it more difficult for police to identify you.

Even the fashion industry is getting in on this. This is a hijab vendor that suggests protesting with a keffiyeh and

1  
2 sunglasses for anonymity. That's on the  
3 website. I'll give you all these sites at  
4 the end.

5 The Electronic Frontier Foundation  
6 has an attending a protest guidance page.  
7 It says to protect yourself, it's  
8 important to dress in ways that preserve  
9 your anonymity.

10 And the Within Our Lifetime Advocacy  
11 Group, which shut down Wall Street and  
12 our airports with their rallies, they  
13 have a rally toolkit that says, cover  
14 your face if you do not want to be  
15 identified, and bring a lawyer's phone  
16 number in case you're arrested. Okay,  
17 that's pretty clear what the intent of  
18 those mask wearers are.

19 While a legitimate sliver of the  
20 public has a medical need for masks, and  
21 this legislation accommodates them, the  
22 overwhelming majority of protesters are  
23 using masks to evade law enforcement. New  
24 York State has a laundry list of things  
25 that are illegal because they frustrate



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law enforcement. You cannot have more than 30% tint on the windows of your car, because the police need to see who's operating the car. License plate covers are illegal Vehicle and Traffic Law 402, because we need to know who is driving the car. Frequency jammers that mask with law enforcements, radios and radars are illegal because they need to be able to identify people committing crimes.

Legislators have made it clear that tools to evade law enforcement are not tolerated in New York State. Masks are being used as just this type of tool. Masks are known to their wearers to provide anonymity, and they prevent law enforcement from tracking down criminals. Their use in this fashion should be illegal.

We've seen how masks evade law enforcement when the Manhattan D.A. dropped charges against 31 Columbia University encampment protesters claiming insufficient evidence because they were

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2 masked. Public safety demands that we  
3 know who is behind the raised fist the  
4 smoke bomb, the lead pipe, the menacing  
5 knife.

6 As the Democratic Party chairman  
7 said, masked demonstrators accosting  
8 people are cowards. Jacobs said, if you  
9 believe in something, show your face. If  
10 you hide your identity, there's a reason.

11 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
12 Philip Nolan.

13 (Whereupon, no verbal  
14 response).

15 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Julie Lam.

16 MS. LAM: Thank you for the  
17 opportunity to speak. My name is Julie  
18 Lam, founder of Mask Together America.

19 As a representative of NIH Recovery,  
20 I ask you to see the world through the  
21 eye of an immunocompromised long hauler  
22 when you vote today. Twenty days ago, I  
23 saw four anti-science legislators say yes  
24 to ban masks on Long Island, even as new  
25 Covid variants and bird flu advance. The

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horrific sight brought back memories of 2020.

My friend, Dr. Barry Webber worked at Mount Sinai E.R., where PPE shortages and lack of mask use put him in danger. He died along with over 80,000 New Yorkers in this pandemic. Many workers in my building contracted Covid. My friend Chris Terry had to work while sick. Covid didn't kill him initially, but organ damage and long Covid did; he was only 39. Losing friends to Covid prompted me to initiate Mask Together America, a national group of volunteers promoting masking and public health. Covid 19 is still killing people every day.

Long Covid follows even mild infection, I can attest. I have devoted four plus years to this community of disabled and high risk individuals who urged me to testify today. Our hearts are broken seeing our government bend mitigation and turn it's back on vulnerable people.

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I have IgA and young people lose their kidneys with this autoimmune disease. My condition was indolent until I caught Covid, infected by someone without symptoms and vaccinated. Another infection would be another punch to my body. Because of autoimmunity, I can't take another booster.

Lacking sick leave, people can't stay home when sick. As someone immunocompromised, I rely on my mask to filter unhealthy air indoors and outdoors. I'm horrified by the discrimination, likely under a mask ban. Businesses might use the mask ban to deny services to me and others.

In the US, at least 60 million people are disabled and 17 million people are immunocompromised. A mask ban will stop people from using this effective mitigation, especially if they might be jailed or fined 1000 for wearing a mask inside a store or participating in civic action.

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I wouldn't have been able to speak out for the disabled community at a long Covid awareness demonstration in D.C. this spring. If the sponsor hadn't mandated masks to avoid the detrimental impact of spreading the dangerous viruses. I definitely could not be here if I have to unmask. Today, if you vote yes, you will be taking away our last protection and leaving the at risk population behind.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Emily Mervosh.

MS. MERVOSH: Hi, my name is Emily Mervosh. I am a resident of Nassau County and I am speaking today against the mask ban. There are many people who wanted to testify today, but this meeting is inaccessible to those who are high risk for severe Covid as there is no zoom option. Many have instead submitted comments via email. I urge you to consider their comments as well.

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A medical exemption to this ban is inadequate. Everyone should be allowed to wear a mask to protect their own health, regardless of whether or not they are immunocompromised. Everyone is at risk for developing long Covid. This is scientifically supported.

Additionally, this exemption does not include masking rights for people who were caretakers of the immunocompromised, for people who cannot afford to get sick due to lack of sick pay or childcare, or people who simply just don't want to get sick over and over again. We all have a right to protect ourselves and our communities from illness.

Eighty percent of disabilities are invisible, so it is impossible to tell who needs a medical exemption. I, for one, have an invisible disability. By looking at me, it wouldn't be obvious that I needed a health exemption. I am already harassed on a consistent basis for wearing a mask in public. I have been

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2 harassed several times today in this very  
3 meeting. A mask ban will simply further  
4 increase that harassment.

5 Law enforcement are not equipped,  
6 nor should they be allowed to determine  
7 who can mask. A mask ban, with exemptions  
8 could only be enforced through subjective  
9 reasoning as we've been talking about,  
10 through whether someone thinks someone  
11 might have the intent to commit a crime.  
12 This can lead to inconsistent application  
13 of the law, which will greatly harm  
14 marginalized communities. Black and Asian  
15 American New Yorkers especially, have  
16 been historically targeted and harassed  
17 for mask wearing.

18 I have not heard this bill or anyone  
19 here mentioned how law enforcement are  
20 supposed to tell the difference between  
21 these so-called bad actors that everyone  
22 keeps talking about, versus someone else  
23 who's just trying to protect themselves  
24 or just go about their life. This will  
25 lead to racial profiling.

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My final point -- I have two final points. First being, as has been spoken before anonymity is a protected right. We don't have to show our faces. And also that, honestly, mask wearing doesn't really hide anyone's identity. There is a recent photo that went viral of celebrities Timothee Chalamet and Kylie Jenner, who are wearing masks trying to protect their identity. These photos were even taken from the side. You can only see parts of their faces and yet they were very, very easily identifiable. Sunglasses and baseball caps hide identity more than a mask, and we are not proposing bans on either of those things.

In short, this law will not have the effect that you were hoping for. Instead, it will put the safety and health of Nassau County residents further at risk.

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Ronen Levy.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)



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LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Angelique  
Corthais.

DR. CORTHAIS: With respect to this  
assembly, my name is Dr. Angelique  
Corthais. I'm the medical advisor for  
Mask Together America, and I am a  
scientist who has received federal grants  
to study Covid and SARS-CoV-2. One of  
those people that's taking you out of  
this pandemic.

I'm here to share my deep concern  
about the proposed mask ban in Nassau  
County as it currently stands. I really  
empathize with some of the testimonies  
we've heard earlier today, but I have too  
often been caught since the beginning of  
the pandemic, in the crossfire of the  
politicization of masks, to not speak  
here today.

I've been bullied, spat on, coughed  
on, verbally abused just for protecting  
my health. Mask bans give some members of  
the public who do not want to understand  
the nuances of the current bill and act

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on its vagueness, encouragement and emboldening to continue with their attacks against me and my community.

Covid is still ravaging our communities, especially a medically and socially economically vulnerable communities and people of color. Making masks a political issue again is supremely shortsighted, especially on the eve of the potential new pandemic of an airborne virus that's H5n1.

Instead of adopting a policy of normalizing mask wearing, as is the case for most of East Asia, politicians have demonized it in favor of a return to a normal that simply doesn't exist. Vaccines are efficient against developing severe Covid, but totally inefficient at preventing long Covid and transmission, as we are seeing in this current wave. Many people cannot receive the vaccines for health reasons. Their only tools are masks. Vax and relax as a public health policy without any effort for other

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mitigation has killed more people in the US than in the early days of the pandemic.

Important studies have shown, as we heard earlier, that when properly worn, masks are an amazingly effective tools against airborne transmission and a terrible tool at concealing identity. If the government is not going to protect us by providing funds for clean air in public spaces, or reliable monitoring of cases, hospitalizations and fatalities, or access to free, reliable PCR test treatment and vaccine, then, at the very least, they should not prevent me from using protective measures.

Thank you very much and with respect.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Okay. Claire Gunner.

MS. GUNNER: My name is Claire Gunner. I am a legal services attorney. I work with clients with disabilities, and I am here to oppose the proposed mask

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2 ban. Regardless of the bill's intent, it  
3 will target those wearing masks for  
4 health reasons. In addition to the fact  
5 that Covid continues to circulate and  
6 cause serious, frequently long term  
7 illness, masks are essential for  
8 immunocompromised and chronically ill  
9 people to participate in public life.  
10 Banning masks in public in any capacity  
11 amounts to a denial of the right to  
12 protect one's health in public.

13 Thank you.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Rebecca  
15 Goldaper.

16 (Whereupon, no verbal  
17 response.)

18 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Michal  
19 Richardson.

20 MS. RICHARDSON: Hello, my name is  
21 Michael Richardson. My father, of Blessed  
22 Memory, was the rabbi of the Jericho  
23 Jewish Center for 12 years, and he never  
24 hesitated to point out injustices, and he  
25 never minced words. He would simply say,

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that's not right. And that's why I'm here. Because banning masks, criminalizing masking, or in any way disincentivize people from wearing a mask to protect themselves and others is not right.

This bill claims to have health exemptions, but when masks are illegal, fewer people will mask. Healthy people who mask to protect themselves or their vulnerable loved ones won't qualify for an exemption. Neither will people who can't afford to go to the doctor or who need to go to work contagious because they can't afford a sick day. People who fear harassment either won't mask or won't be able to safely participate in the community.

Since last year, I have had long Covid and I must mask because I cannot risk another Covid infection. The more people mask, the safer I am. I have hopes for a new vaccine currently in development, and I had hoped to

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participate in a clinical trial taking place here in Mineola, but I cannot safely participate if masks become illegal here. I too, worry about anti-Semitism, but if I were harassed, I would be safer if my assailants were masked.

Just a few weeks ago, after learning about a proposed mask ban in New York state propped up as some fanciful battle against anti-Semitism, I could not hold back my outrage. I became the co-writer of an open letter signed by Jews for mask writes. So far we have signatures from over 1300 Jews, including almost 50 from Nassau County, all of whom astonishingly agree on something. Banning masks will not make us safer. It won't solve anti-Semitism. It won't stop crime. It will only violate our rights and place us in more danger.

Jewish people have an obligation to protect our health. Our Jewish law commands us to guard our bodies and to

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care for the most vulnerable. Wearing a mask is a fulfillment of that mitzvah or commandment. It protects us, and it makes our spaces safer for high risk members of our community. If a mask ban passes, people who mask will become even more of an outlier, more at risk of illness, more a target of harassment, more subject to discrimination, police stops and exclusion from a society that already views us as dispensable, as unfortunate collateral in the march to return to some bizarre idea of normalcy, even as Covid numbers surge and more people become sick and disabled.

If you vote to pass a mask ban today, I need you to know that what you are doing is not right.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Vanessa Cayman.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Joseph

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Esraq.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Jeremy  
Joseph.

MR. JOSEPH: Hi, my name is Jeremy  
Joseph. I'm a resident of Hicksville. I'm  
here to voice my opposition to the Mask  
Transparency Act.

The language of this bill is so  
poorly defined, it's embarrassing that  
we're even discussing this. The law  
applies when there is intent to  
intimidate, threaten, abuse, or harass  
any person. This bill penalizes based on  
intent. If someone is wearing a mask and  
determined to have bad intentions, not  
actions, intentions, then they could be  
charged with violating this law. Thought  
crime and preventing crime, this is a  
science fiction concept, not something we  
should be legislating with. Initially I  
thought this joke was too dumb to say,  
but then Legislator Ferretti suggested



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this is a serious policy proposal.

Now let's look at the exceptions for this legislation. This law shall not apply when worn to protect the health or safety of the wearer for religious or cultural purposes, or for the peaceful celebration of a holiday or similar religious or cultural purposes for the cultural event for which masks are customarily worn. How is a religious or cultural purpose or event defined? My religious and cultural practices dictate that I stand up for racial equality, and that's something that is historically seen as threatening and harassing behavior. Now, what assurance do I have that I would have protections from this law? Ultimately, this law will be carried out based on one person's judgment. Is this person participating in a religious or cultural action that I recognize or that I do not recognize? More simply, is this masked person doing something I like or do not like?

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So what do we not like in Nassau County? The answer lies in how we enforce our laws. In Nassau County we have a police force with well documented racial bias against black and brown residents. Black and brown people are stopped at a higher rate than any other racial group in this county. They experienced use of force from police at a higher rate than any other group in this county.

Now, this is the important part. Among these racial groups, they have the lowest rate of being arrested or charged with a crime. The Nassau County Police are disproportionately targeted black and brown residents, and with this law, they'll have additional license to do so.

The goals of this bill, admirable or not, are not achieved by this bill. This bill does not do what you think it does. What it does, it gives a poorly trained police force another tool to harass the minority residents of this county. I can't wait till winter time when a young

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black man with a scarf around his face is charged with a crime because a police officer thinks there is bad intentions. Think that sounds crazy? Well, that's what this bill says. It's crazy.

If black people are just collateral damage for the immediate passage of this poorly written bill, then you are for hatred, not against it. Vote no on this bill and come back with something that works.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: David Wapner.

MR. WAPNER: My name is David Wapner. I am a clinical psychologist who worked in a hospital at Interfaith Medical Center over the entire course of the pandemic. I showed up the whole time, and when the law changed, requiring us to be vaccinated, I was fired.

I am here today as a Jew. You must put this mandate in. I want to tell you about a concept called deindividuation, which is a term coined by the social

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psychologist Leon Festinger in the '50s. It's a phenomenon in which people engage in seemingly impulsive, deviant, and sometimes violent acts in situations which they believe they cannot be personally identified, they don't behave the way they normally do. This explains riots. This explains the behavior that we've been seeing at the protests.

I've been showing up the whole time. This past Saturday, I showed up to show my support for the black community after the murder of Sonya Massey, and I brought a poster of Martin Luther King Jr. walking with Rabbi Heschel at Selma, and I held it with both arms. I have the video here. I was assaulted, I had a chain snatched from my neck. I was not protected by police who couldn't do anything to stop the people that they couldn't identify.

I have another video here from July 4th, the 4th of July, where we protested with a friend of mine who was a Jewish

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veteran disabled person, and somebody came out of the crowd and snapped her cane over their leg and was not prosecuted, just disappeared right back into the crowd. I have this video here.

I have another video where this is some white kid who grabbed the flag from around my friend's neck and pulled it and ran away and disappeared back into the crowd, wearing a keffiyeh wrapped around her head the way that terrorists do. Every day there's more stuff. We need to be protected. I'm out there every day. I'm not going to stop going. Jews need to step up. Aside from what we're fighting for right now, our free speech needs to be protected as well. This ban must be implemented.

Thank you for the time.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: David Norber.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Juliana.

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Hedeman.

MS. HEDEMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Juliana, and I'm a longtime resident of Nassau County. I'm at this meeting today to speak against the proposed Mask Transparency Act.

Though I am not in a group considered high risk of severe Covid, I am someone who has continued to mask in public since the pandemic started in 2020. I have mainly continued to mask as studies come out on the harmful long term effects of Covid, i.e. I mask to protect my health. I also mask because I'm the caretaker of my grandmother, a 94 year old Jewish woman who has lived in Nassau County for all of her adult life, who would be greatly impacted by even a single infection. I have been able to protect her and myself from Covid for the last four years, primarily because I mask any time I am in a shared public space.

Now, I understand that the purported aim of this bill is to protect Jewish

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residents from bad actors and anti-Semitism. And as a Jewish New Yorker, I do not believe mask bans will achieve this goal. Just two weeks ago, Governor Hochul stated that crime is actually down 15% on Long Island. Nassau County is also often considered one of the safest counties in America. Meanwhile, Covid continues to actively harm New Yorkers across the board, regardless of race or religion. An estimated 10 to 20% of Covid cases lead to long Covid, and masks are a proven tool that help curb spread. It's been discussed that this bill is simply a return to an old law that was in place before the pandemic. However, the truth is we are in different times with different considerations than we were in 2019. Simply put, the old law does not make sense for the moment we're in; a moment where there is a highly contagious airborne virus spreading in schools, offices, supermarkets, doctors' offices

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and anywhere else people congregate. A virus that has killed over a million Americans in four years, disables people daily and is now, according to the CDC, the fourth leading cause of death in America. A moment where masks are the best tool we have to slow the spread and save lives.

I say all of this understanding that there is a health exemption written into the bill. However, how will it be determined who is masking for their health or who is masking for more nefarious reasons? How will a law enforcement officer know what the intention is behind someone's mask? If someone is at a peaceful protest legally their right under the First Amendment but is wearing a mask to protect their health, are they now considered suspicious? Especially since the new language states you cannot be masked in groups where others are masked. On that same line, am I no longer allowed in



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2 public with friends or family who are  
3 also masked since we'd be in a group? How  
4 can you reasonably know what someone's  
5 reason is for masking? Despite what many  
6 here want you to think, masking is not  
7 inherently violent. Rather, it is an act  
8 of community care. Immunocompromised and  
9 disabled people of the right to protest  
10 and have a right to be in public, and  
11 their ability to mask makes that  
12 possible. I strongly urge you to vote no  
13 on this bill.

14 Thank you.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Susan  
16 Gottlieb.

17 (Whereupon, no verbal  
18 response.)

19 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Nicole  
20 Richards.

21 MS. RICHARDS: My name is Nicole  
22 Richards. My family has resided in Nassau  
23 County since 1997. I hold a master's  
24 degree in Urban Policy and Leadership  
25 from CUNY Hunter College, and I'm a proud

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Jewish woman. I come to you today to urge you to vote against the proposed Mask Transparency Act.

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Since the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, face masks worn for the purposes of protecting one's health have been unnecessarily politicized. Masks are a personal protection tool, and they are, at this point, one of the only tools many individuals still have to protect themselves in public spaces from communicable diseases.

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What I find notable is many of the arguments made by those who opposed mask requirements in 2020 were grounded in the idea that the government should not be able to regulate individual decisions regarding health and safety. So why is it that many of those same people who are against masking, supposedly in the name of American individualism, are now trying to advance lawmaking, which criminalize this personal choice? It is because those who are pushing to ban facial coverings

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2 are doing so not to prevent crime, which  
3 is statistically down in Nassau County,  
4 but to repress political opposition. This  
5 runs counter to the American right to  
6 assemble and protest.

7 I am not here to debate Israel  
8 policy with you, but I want to clearly  
9 state that you don't get to define  
10 something as hate speech just because you  
11 don't like that point of view. You can  
12 disagree with opinions espoused on  
13 college campuses. You cannot outlaw those  
14 opinions. I ask you to momentarily  
15 compare the concept of such restrictions  
16 to the First Amendment, to other  
17 constitutional amendments, and to think  
18 about how these same politicians, who are  
19 staunchly opposed to any restrictions on  
20 firearms based on the Second Amendment,  
21 are now trying to carve out exceptions to  
22 the First Amendment. This bill sends a  
23 very scary precedent for government  
24 overreach.

25 As a Jewish New Yorker, I'm

1  
2 extremely concerned about the utilization  
3 of fears of the Jewish community to  
4 advance legislation that encroaches on  
5 freedom of religion itself. The bill's  
6 religious exceptions are left  
7 intentionally vague, and there are no  
8 safeguards to prevent law enforcement  
9 from profiling individuals that view as  
10 threatening merely because of their race  
11 or ethnicity.

12 Similarly, the proposed exemption  
13 for health related purposes is  
14 underwritten, lacking in specificity, and  
15 impossible to enforce without risking the  
16 health and safety of individual Nassau  
17 County residents.

18 When pressed on specifics of such  
19 exemptions, the answer is given by those  
20 who support mask bans have shown time and  
21 time again that these legislators lack an  
22 understanding of disability justice. Not  
23 all chronic health conditions which leave  
24 one immunocompromised are visible, and to  
25 suggest that those who are disabled are

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2 not also capable of participating in  
3 public life, which includes protest, is  
4 insulting. Those who are disabled and  
5 immunocompromised have the right to go  
6 about their lives without the necessity  
7 of added discriminatory personal  
8 identification.

9 Additionally, many individuals,  
10 including myself, mask to prevent  
11 contracting illnesses, including but not  
12 limited to Covid 19, the flu, and even  
13 the common cold. I also seek to highlight  
14 the many hard working individuals who  
15 mask because their employers do not  
16 provide adequate paid leave and they  
17 cannot afford to miss work if they become  
18 ill. Information to conflate the act of  
19 covering one's face with violence is to  
20 presume the worst in every Nassau County  
21 resident, and voting to criminalize face  
22 coverings would be set a dangerous step  
23 backwards for our county and our country.

24 Thank you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Gina

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Friedlander.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Gerald  
Podlesat.

MR. PODLESAT: My name is Gerry  
Podlesat and for those who in this  
chamber who do not know me, I spent a  
good 30 some odd years in the Nassau  
County Attorney's office, and I spent  
about 7 or 8 years as Bureau Chief of  
Legal Counsel. One of my duties was to  
draft legislation for the Administration  
to be filed with this Legislature. I can  
tell you that if this bill had come  
through my shop, I would not have  
approved it, and I would have added many  
other things to make it more  
constitutionally protected.

I hate, as a good Republican, to  
side with the Minority here. I do. I  
think that it is incumbent on the  
Majority to allow for further discussions  
and refinements of the legislation.

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I have several specific problems with it and the aspect of what we had talked about several times was the state law. I believe that there may be a preclusion issue here because of the State's involvement, and I don't think that that existence of that repeal gives this Body the power to reenact it or something similar to it.

I'm also concerned with the idea that a traffic stop would give the police the authority to implement the law. Most of the time when you're looking at people driving, they are not wearing masks. But I don't understand why that would have to be included in the law.

Also from the standpoint of of how it should proceed, it should proceed from the rights of the individuals to wear masks rather than that becoming something that has to be proved to a police officer. The presumption should be that the wearer of the mask is entitled to do so. That is not the presumption in this

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piece of legislation.

Finally, this is a matter of a criminal law. The District Attorney's office should have input into this. In addition, it is necessary at this point to table this matter, have the work done on it and then bring it back. That is the way it should be done by a honorable Legislature.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you, sir.

Yaffa Rabe.

MS. RABE: My name is Yaffa Rabe. I live in Nassau County for the last 30 years. I feel that I live in a very safe environment thanks to our police department and our leadership. I also feel that in the last nine months, our life became very difficult and dangerous because people's demonstrations in the streets and on colleges in every educational system grounds, people wearing masks to conceal their identity and allow themselves to practice violence



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against Jews, students and everybody around them. They did so on the subways. They did so on the ground of all the universities all over the United States and in Nassau County.

And I feel that if somebody wants to protest civil rights, allow them to do so. And I feel that it's the right thing to do. However, do not be afraid to say what you say and show your face so you are an honest protester. If you conceal your identity, you are not honest and you are facing only protest that goes to violence. Stop the violence. Remove the mask and show your face. Otherwise, stop the demonstrations.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Julie  
Sacks.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Amanda  
Poliquin.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Sanford.  
Rubenstein.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Kiana  
Abbady.

MS. ABBADY: Good afternoon,  
Legislative Body. Good afternoon to  
everyone present. I want to first of all  
say my name loud and clearly. My name is  
Kiana Abbady. I'm a resident of Long  
Island. I have been for all 31 years of  
my life, and I come to you quite frazzled  
and a little traumatized. And I'm going  
to speak using today as a demonstration  
of what this legislation is going to look  
like in real time.

I am well versed in how to prevent  
incidents at protests. I have organized  
protests myself. Many of you on this

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Legislative Body recognize me as an employee of one of your former colleagues, either here in the county or at the state. I have at least 12 years of government political experience.

The incident, for those of you that might not be present because I recognize here that there are a lot of different people here now. What I was trying to do earlier today was to de-escalate a situation in the corner on the side. Many of my allies -- I am speaking against the mask ban -- are on this side -- to my right, your left of the room. In my attempt to deescalate without a mask, I was the one that became targeted. I was the one that was removed. With a mask, I tremble, truly tremble, to understand how this legislation is going to be enacted in a similar situation outside of these four walls. You are expecting a police officer to enter a highly volatile space and be able to, with solid judgment, ascertain whether someone wearing a mask

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has ill intent. During a highly volatile space, I'm trained, they are trained. I was still removed. I am trained to make sure bad actors do not affect my movement. But you have removed me in an effort to claim that this legislation, my removal because I'm wearing a mask, will create better safety for the Jewish population. The intent of the bill, as you've identified it, is to address all hate crimes. But again, I remind you, I was the one removed.

I want to speak very clearly about who this bill will target, because it's very clear that you have chosen to participate in a culture war without recognizing that you are feeding right into a very dangerous demon (buzzer) -- I will continue to speak because you have let --

(Whereupon, public member continues. Microphone is turned off, three minute time to speak is over.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Officers, will you help this young lady? She seems unable to leave the podium.

(Whereupon, public interruption.)

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Again. Legislator Kopel, you allowed the woman in the front, the lawyer to speak beyond three minutes. And you did not ask the police to remove her.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: In fairness, everybody were taking a recess until you calm down.

(Whereupon, recess.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Danielle Phillip.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Alina Naganova. Jenna Atwell.

MS. NAGANOVA: Honorable Legislators, I came here as a mother of three, a civic leader in my community. And my oldest child is going to college

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as a freshman in a few weeks. He's going to be at a campus where many violent protests took place this spring. I came here to support Legislator Pilip's Mask Transparency Act, and I had a whole speech prepared of why I'm in support, but a lot of supporters already mentioned all the things I wanted to mention, and I kind of revised my speech a little bit.

I wanted to address the opponents that are sitting in the Legislature. I address Legislator Carrie A. Solages, DeRiggi, Legislator Drucker who I've worked with as a civic leader and the rest of you opposing this in the audience. Enough. Enough, please. Enough divisive politics. Your constituents elected you to represent them, not to turn everything into politics and to race bait and gender bait. Enough.

One. Do you not have faith in the cops that keep our country as one of the county, as one of the safest in the United States? Let me be very clear. This

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bill does not target your grandmother wearing a mask at a grocery store. It does not affect the masked nurse working a long shift in the hospital. In fact, it was very carefully written. So all of you that were addressing long Covid and all of that, there's exceptions in this act for that. Number one.

Number two, do you know that Governor Hochul recently actually introduced a ban on face masks in subways and protests, but has since gone silent on that? Do you know that?

Legislator Carrie A. Solages, I address you. Do you remember the dark moment in history when hooded and masked Ku Klux Klan spread terror in black communities? We rose then as a nation, right? We rose and made sure that we unmasked those hooded protesters. Would you rush to pass this act if these Ku Klux Klan members were outside your door? So how is Mazi Pilip's bill any different? We're facing a very similar

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challenge today. And once again, you and we must rise to meet it.

You also said you worry about free speech and all of you in the audience, we know exactly what the Constitution says, but it never intended to protect those who use this as a weapon against their fellow citizens.

Those who worry that our police won't be able to enforce this act, our police do a hell of a good job in this county. I cannot believe that you were still sitting there interrogating our Top Cop, Commissioner Ryder, who keeps this county the safest county in the United States. Please, let's give them that credit. Shame on you.

Think also of our main streets, because nobody mentioned that and the businesses that are the backbone of our community. Look at New York City protest, businesses that have been struggling due to economy, and now they keep the customers away.



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Thank you, brave Mazi Pilip. Thank you. I ask you to pass this bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm going to ask that people who are addressing us at the podium, don't scream. We hear you.

MS. ATWELL: I'm Jenna.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: You're Jenna. I just called your name?

MS. ATWELL: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Well, then go for it.

MS. ATWELL: Good evening. My name is Jenna, and I do not support the Mask Transparency Act. The Mask Transparency Act as currently written is wholly unconscionable. Everyone has a right to wear a mask. I think this law would cause a chilling effect within the community and would dissuade residents from wearing masks for health reasons because they fear potential legal consequences.

The health exception is entirely inadequate because the current exceptions

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2 language is imprecise and relies on  
3 individual police officers to interpret  
4 the law. Interpreting the law is not the  
5 job of the police, and it never has been  
6 in this state or in this country. So  
7 determining who is and isn't masking for  
8 health reasons should not be a  
9 determination made by the police,  
10 especially without clear and explicit  
11 legislative guidance. Placing the burden  
12 on individual officers to make this  
13 determination leaves room for errors by  
14 police, potential profiling of black  
15 residents as well as other residents of  
16 color, wrongful arrest and causing  
17 overall harm to the community.

18 Therefore, the Mask Transparency Act  
19 should not be enacted as currently  
20 written as it puts the lives and health  
21 of the residents of Nassau County in  
22 danger.

23 Thank you.

24 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: D'anna  
25 Morgan.

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MS. MORGAN: Good afternoon. I support Legislator Mazi Pilip's mask bill because it underscores the importance of promoting public safety in aiding law enforcement by preventing individuals from concealing their identities while engaging in violent or criminal activity.

Recently, as of Wednesday, I personally observed instances at an anti-Semitic protest in New York City where individuals set up smoke bombs, threw fireworks at the opposing side, displayed flags of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. This bill addresses the urgent need to mitigate potential threats to the community safety, and to ensure accountability amongst protesters.

By voting in favor of this bill, legislators can take a stand against those who misuse the First Amendment to commit unlawful acts, thereby safeguarding the rights and well-being of all citizens. Do the right thing. Vote

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yes.

Thank you, Mazi, for standing tall and fighting for all of us.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Evette Stark.

MS. STARK: My God, I'm so tired. I would assume that you are too. My name is Evette Stark and I came here to support this bill. This act.

I have been, a protestor at Union Square in the city and all over in the five boroughs against the lockdowns when they started, and the Medical Freedom Party probably started with a senior group that I belong to in Greenwich Village and in Union Square.

First of all, we were burning masks a long time ago because we knew that there was no scientific evidence that masks do anything except when you're in surgery and you have liquids coming all over you and you're a doctor. So there's no scientific evidence about masks.

Now, if people have been brainwashed and psyops by our media, okay. And by

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corporations, well that's okay. All these nice people, they want to wear masks. That's okay. But a lot of this is about supporting the anonymity of people who are weaponizing our Constitution, our civil rights and our Bill of rights.

And it's not just against Jews. I am a Jew. It's not just against being Jewish. There are also Christians. There are also African Americans who protest in the city. So this is not about just the safety of Jews, okay? This is about the safety of everyone. Everyone, an Iranian Jew, okay? It's the safety of Christians who have been with us.

So I just really want to say that the masks here, this whole conversation about the protection and its medical and all this crap is crap. There is no scientific evidence that masks do anything except people are engaged in a cognitive dissonance because they have been so brainwashed and MKUltra by our advertisers and by media who own

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everything, and the corporations who own everything.

So it's not about black, white, about Jew, Christian, it's about humanity. And it's about we all bleed red. We all want to be protected. And the people do attack us in masks. I'm a senior. One of my friends was hit with somebody in a mask on a bus and was sent to Elmhurst Hospital, a senior. So now I'm talking about seniors. I have been threatened. I have had signs that I've carried thrown down subway stairs. I have had water thrown on me. I have been spit on and this is not acceptable. And I don't know who the people are who are doing it because they're covered in masks.

Also, I have a big mouth and I'm not afraid to talk. And I've been to DC, I've been to Albany, and I've protested all these mandates for the vaccines, which we know, if you've read the Bilderberg Group or if you've read Davos or if you've read

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any of the CDC sites, have really killed people, not protected people. And this is about a deep population problem that has been involving our government. Our government has been the enemy. Not saying you're the enemy, but our government has and they have been killing us.

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Thank you.

Ngozi Alston. Ngozi Alston.

MS. ALSTON: I live in Laurelton, New York, which borders Nassau County. I'm a black, queer, disabled person living with scleroderma. Since the very beginning of this pandemic, I have taken strict precautions because of my autoimmune condition. I see a rheumatologist every three months to get bloodwork, because I am at high risk of developing and dying from interstitial lung disease and scleroderma renal crisis. Every time I leave the house, I'm going to Nassau County. Whether it's to pick up groceries, medication, or go to

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doctor's appointments, I am often the only person masked any place I go. According to the cops, I look like a criminal.

Five years into this pandemic, I moved into my grandparents home to finalize their ongoing estate matters. I work from home part time, and I'm on Medicaid because I do not consistently make enough money to buy groceries and medications and pay my bills. There are few job opportunities and every disabled person I know, including myself, is either underemployed or unemployed. We have systematically been forced out of every aspect of society. The world has chosen to deny the very real, ongoing threat of SARS-CoV-2. I have become so isolated that I've lost friends and family who refused to take basic precautions, like regularly testing and masking before meeting up in person.

The entire world gaslights me for wanting to keep myself safe and maintain



1  
2 my quality of life, which is already  
3 pretty questionable. I should not have to  
4 worry about whether I'm going to have the  
5 cops called on me because I ask my doctor  
6 to wear an N95. I shouldn't have to worry  
7 about being fined \$1,000 because I'm  
8 grocery shopping. Requiring me to have  
9 papers documenting my health status is  
10 bullshit. Be fucking for real. Repression  
11 breeds resistance. If you ban masking, we  
12 will keep fighting back. I do not feel  
13 safe, I am terrified.

14 Fuck this fascist shit. Zionism is a  
15 threat to us all and deserves to be beat  
16 back. Over 100,000 Palestinians have been  
17 murdered by a settler colonial state.  
18 Where's the accountability for that? Vote  
19 no on this new Genesis legislation, the  
20 number of traumatic incidents that I've  
21 had advocating for my dying grandparents  
22 over the past two years are too many to  
23 recount.

24 In September of 2022, my grandfather  
25 was dying from heart failure at

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Northshore University Hospital. On my third or fourth consecutive day of visiting, a security guard told me that I could not go upstairs because I was "wearing the wrong mask". I was told to remove my flow mask respirator and swap it for a blue surgical mask. There's plenty of research that shows a high quality respirator is more effective than a surgical mask.

Five months ago, I ended up in the E.R. with a mysterious rash. After several hours, I was discharged and told I had contact dermatitis due to me wearing a mask. I told the doctor that I disagreed, but didn't know what else to do. I was bringing an emergency referral to a dermatologist in Harlem, and a few days later she confirmed that I had shingles and I had to urgently return to the E.R..

As I continue to advocate for myself, I wonder if I have to fight this hard, what is happening to people who

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2 can't speak, are unconscious, and can't  
3 even communicate, or don't even recognize  
4 the levels of negligence that is  
5 happening right here, and medical  
6 facilities that are supposed to be caring  
7 for them. Fuck Zionism.

8 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Kiara Bryant.

9 MS. BRYANT: Good afternoon. I'm  
10 here to speak against the mask ban.  
11 First, I like everybody to recommend a  
12 couple of books for everybody: *Sundown*  
13 *Towns* by James Loewen and *Cast* by Isabel  
14 Wilkerson. The books will provide you  
15 with clear examples of the dangers of  
16 perceived intent and the point that,  
17 historically speaking, whenever laws are  
18 passed that empower one citizen to pass  
19 judgment over another private citizens  
20 behavior for arbitrary or subjective  
21 reasons, black people have always ended  
22 up being marginalized. Despite any good  
23 intentions connected to the drafting of  
24 this legislation, its broad language  
25 enables individuals with suspect

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intentions to weaponize it.

I was once told by a white person that they felt threatened and insulted by a shirt I was wearing. The shirt said "black history did not start with slavery". What if it were a mask and not my shirt? Would that keep that kind of person, from attempting to report me? I'm not saying I'll automatically be arrested.

And you know, Commissioner Ryder's folks won't do the right thing. But why should I have to experience that in the first place? If you have never been perceived as a threat simply because of how you look or what you are wearing, then you might not be able to imagine how dangerous a loss such as this one could be in its present state.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Jennifer Unger, Jennifer Unger.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Bridget Jones.

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MS. JONES: My name is Bridgette. I want to stand up to show you what Covid did to my legs. So. Of course, what I wrote is not going to load. So the preparation will be just as bad as the hot garbage that went into this bill. So I can die from probably at this point, given how my legs have turned to corned beef and I'm not getting enough blood flow to my brain or my heart, because of two of the most common conditions that affect the long haulers. Which now there are some other estimates that are more updated that put it at 65 million Americans.

I'm out of breath just from moving my arms and from being upright. My first Covid infection started to turn my legs purple when I stand up, which I will now begin to demonstrate. Can y'all still hear me? Alrighty. So I really want to you all to see my purple toes is one of the few visible symptoms I have besides just staggering around and looking like

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I'm on drugs, which got me criminalized before I had access to this \$14,000 Medicaid chariot that I now rely on to move.

I want to thank everybody who got me outside today. The only way I can be safely in public or at home, for that matter, with other people, is if folks mask. You're essentially banning me from gathering with people from my own species. That has already been the case for four years. I'm on year five of quarantining from this virus, trying to survive. And the people most affected by the diseases that I live with do not look like me skin tone wise. They are more likely to get these diseases, they are less likely to get care. They are more likely to get medically gaslit. And now you're trying to make it a crime for them to mask and for crime for me to mask, for that matter. You still couldn't give her a straight answer about whether it's legal for a family of immunocompromised

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people to enter a store in this county.

So, yeah, the blood is draining from my brain a little more.

(Whereupon, audience member attempts to assist.)

MS. JONES: Please stay away from me. Thank you. You're not masked.

Safety matters when masking. Coming into my proximity without a mask is dangerous. You are banning me from being in public. You are banning me from being with my caregivers. If I hire a caregiver from Nassau County, and I need them to mask in public to keep me safe from this airborne pandemic you have failed to mitigate, what am I supposed to do? Ask them to risk \$1,000 fine and a year in jail. It's already hard enough to protect me and keep me alive. Jesus fucking Christ. Garbage ass fascist shit.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Harry Burger.

MR. BURGER: My name is Harry Burger, and while I live in Suffolk, most

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of my family lives here in Nassau. And I come here often. If this bill passes, I'll need to avoid this county like a plague village. You need to vote no on the Mask Transparency Act.

While, this has become casually known as the Nassau Mask Ban, it ought to be called the Disabled Lives Don't Matter act. We need to encourage, even require more people to wear masks, not fewer.

While no in-person social interactions can have zero risk of Covid transmission, and driving anywhere carries a risk of accident, bare faced breath swapping is like drunk driving; both put yourself and others at much higher risk. Any legal restriction on public masking is intrinsically ableist and discriminates against disabled people.

Covid is not over. It is still infecting, disabling and killing people every day. The only way anybody can escape being disabled someday is by a



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sudden, traumatic death. And once you join this club, you will be on the receiving end of the ableism that you don't stop before then.

Two and a half years ago, my first Covid infection left me with long Covid. Among other chronic health issues, it means that just coming here to speak with you will probably be enough exertion to leave me completely exhausted for all day tomorrow. I know others with long Covid who wish their good days were equal to my bad days. Even professional athletes in the peak of health at the Olympics are not immune to having their careers ruined by their first Covid infection.

Anyone who is still coviding (sic) at this point has had the experience of being the lone masker going into a store or even a medical office to find that I'm the only person here wearing a mask. Random strangers have harassed me just for trying to shop safely. If they try that with me, a six foot tall white man

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who looks like I'm not yet disabled, I'm

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sure that visibly marginalized folks

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experience that worse and more often.

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Luckily for me, a do you feel lucky punk

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look and squaring up to make it clear

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that I'm not afraid of them has so far

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been a way to scare most of these bullies

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away, but not everybody can do that. The

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only time I did need to back down was at

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a precinct community meeting, when a

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police sergeant and two of his cop

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buddies, backed up by another 20 of them

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in the room, got up in my business just

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for handing out free masks and asking

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everyone to wear one on the way in.

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Federal courts have determined the

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police on Long Island have an even bigger

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racism problem than most with their

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traffic stops, and if you believe they

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won't carry that bias over into choosing

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who they'll just assume is wearing it to

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second guessed and interrogate, I have a

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bridge to sell you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

Alison Devin.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Alyssa

Stein.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Miranda

Stinson?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Hazel

Newlevant.

MS. NEWLEVANT: Hello. I am a

resident of New York City with friends in  
Nassau County. And I am here to beg you  
not to pass this Mask Transparency Act.  
Any kind of mask ban will discourage  
people from using these important medical  
devices because they don't want to get  
stopped by the police or harassed by  
civilians who use the laws and excuse to

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get hostile. The law would be a potential tool of harassment against disabled people, and black people who surveys show are more likely to mask up to avoid Covid. People like my partner who is also an Ethiopian Jew like you, Legislator. I know people who are medically vulnerable, and they're already too afraid to wear the masks that they need because of the increased scrutiny that they get from police. If this ban passes, it'll be even worse. People need to wear masks for a lot of reasons, including to avoid getting sick so they don't miss work, to protect themselves from getting disabled or dying from airborne illnesses like Covid, to stay uninfected, to prevent vulnerable people that they care for, to protect themselves from environmental and workplace hazards, to protect everyone else around them when they are sick. Fewer masks equals more airborne illness spread, which equals suffering, missed school and work and medical problems and

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expenses piling up.

We are in a Covid wave right now with estimating from wastewater data about 1 in 37 people in the US currently infected, so that practically guarantees that somebody in this room is currently infected with Covid. Each infection carries a significant risk of causing new long term health problems, aka long Covid. Long Covid can manifest in a huge variety of symptoms involving any organ system in the body, depending on where the virus damages or inflames. Brain fog and post exertional malaise are two of the most common symptoms, and long Covid can be disabling. Covid infections make people more likely to have heart attacks or strokes. Wearing a well-fitting respirator with N95 or better filtration is still the best tool that we have to stop Covid transmission.

Also, an aside on the old mask ban law that was from 1845 when they didn't even know that there was such a thing as

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a virus much less airborne transmission that was only discovered in 1890. So it's ridiculous to talk about going back to that.

You might not be worried about getting Covid because you've already had it or you're vaccinated. However, the fewer people who wear masks, the more SARS-CoV-2 spreads and mutates. The more the virus mutates, the more it can escape your prior immunity, and the sooner you get reinfected by a new variant. Discouraging people in Nassau from wearing masks may come back to bite you personally.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Stacey Klein.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Maya Ponton Aronoff.

MS. ARNONOFF: Hi, there. I'm taking it off so nobody can say they didn't hear

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me. I am not a resident, but I come here a lot to speak to friends and family and visit people here. And I'm speaking out against the mask ban for a couple of reasons.

I'll start by saying I do have long Covid. I'm 26 years old. I got it the one time I went out, not masking right before Omicron, because I thought it was over and I tasted freedom. And then I tasted years of debilitating health problems, which made me unable to read and write for a long period of time, make it very difficult to drive. I had to drop out of law school. My husband is now my caretaker, and I didn't even have any of the major prior health conditions that you would think would red flag it. I had autoimmune issues, but it wasn't one of the ones they listed because this is all of our first time with this virus.

Now that that's out of the way, wastewater says we're in another Covid spike. We all wish we were out of this,

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but we're not.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Don't yell, please. Just a little lower.

MS. ARONOFF: But we're not. So we're all still dealing with Covid, right? And I'm sure you are all thinking, okay, all these disabled people, they're getting up here, they're saying they need to mask, but they can get an exemption, right? Is that before or after we're in handcuffs? Is that before or after we've had to miss work because we had to show up for a court date. Is that before or after the job found out you were arrested? Is that before or after I have to pay for a lawyer or you have to get a public defender, right? Is that before or after, if you're black and brown, you've been profiled, harassed, beaten, or potentially killed as we've seen a bunch more people killed in mental health crises just the past couple of weeks across the nation, right? How is profiling based on a mask going to turn



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out any different? We saw even here today how black people in masks were treated by security for speaking a little bit over time. Right. But now we're going to talk about a misdemeanor with \$1,000 fine for wearing a mask.

Last I checked, Halloween wasn't a safety crisis, right? Why is this just now coming up? Well, maybe because since 2020, anti-police brutality protests and pro-Palestine protests have disproportionately masked, right? Maybe because they're more aware of the pandemic, they're more socially aware, maybe of certain social issues and how to take care of one another. And maybe some people don't like what they've heard when people wear a mask or even were actually harmed by someone in a mask, right? Like the lady who was saying she was accosted by someone in a mask.

You know, I've been accosted by a lot of people in my life, a lot of blonds, people wearing Confederate flags.

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A lot of people in a lot of different things -- Sperrys. But that doesn't mean the government can say people can't wear those clothing items. I mean what are we talking about here? Right? Why should I have to get an exemption to wear a mask or white pants after Labor Day or whatever the heck we want to put on our bodies? I mean, what's the logic here? Because someone did some terrible things masks get banned (buzzer). I helped that lady used the restroom. So she's met people who've masked who are just like normal people going about their lives. I wish everyone would mask so I don't have to worry about getting reinfected just to get this point across. And I wish we wouldn't send security after people just trying to talk about police brutality.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you very much.

Sarah Alvandi.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Sereta  
Sergent.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Andrea  
Bolander.

MS. BOLANDER: Regardless of what  
the status quo may insist, the Covid  
pandemic continues and we are currently  
in yet another surge. Disabled and  
immunocompromised people are at  
particular risk of further disability and  
death. Even the average completely  
healthy person is at risk of acquiring  
long term severe post-viral illness known  
as long covid. This is self-evident by  
the explosion of people now seeking  
disability status and specialized care.  
And this will only continue to grow in  
the coming years due to the State's  
decision to completely abandon any  
mitigation measures. I say this as a  
disabled person in a disabled community.  
I say this as someone who works to

1  
2 distribute masks and other PPE amongst  
3 people in need. You have no idea how many  
4 completely healthy former dancers,  
5 athletes and young people I've interacted  
6 with who now best case scenario struggle  
7 to climb a set of stairs and worst case  
8 scenario are fully bedbound and cannot  
9 speak or eat without triggering even  
10 worse illness called post exertional  
11 malaise or PEM.

12 Science has proven that each Covid  
13 infection increases one's chances of  
14 developing long Covid, and that Covid has  
15 the dangerous quality of damaging one's  
16 ability to produce T cells over time. In  
17 other words, Covid can destroy someone's  
18 immune system in the long term. This is  
19 why many doctors and researchers have  
20 drawn a comparison between Covid to HIV  
21 Aids. But while we have been able to  
22 research and understand HIV Aids for  
23 several decades, we have only just been  
24 able to study the effects of Covid for  
25 four years. We still have no idea what

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the long term effects will be, but the early picture is bad.

I urge you to familiarize yourself with the scientific literature when you see reports of sudden increases in heart attacks and strokes in young and healthy individuals, when you see reports of widespread hospitalization of children due to viruses that historically never affected them strongly, when you see a sudden increase in cancer rates in young people, know that the literature proves that Covid is part of the reason why.

Plus, public health is not an individual project. Unfortunately, we are vulnerable to the decisions that other people make since one way masking doesn't always work. In an ideal world, everyone is masking in order to protect themselves and others from Covid.

So since everyone is at risk of long term illness from Covid, and since everyone benefits from individuals who mask because each individual who does so

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stops a chain of transmission, that means everyone, not just chronically ill and vulnerable people, deserve the right to mask and to protect themselves from life threatening illness. So any proposals that the mask ban only apply to folks without medical exemption is not only illogical, it's also illegal. The State does not have any right to know our private medical information. The State does not have any right to force individuals to expose themselves to Covid. It is completely immoral and irresponsible to criminalize one of the few and final protections citizens have been left with to protect themselves from devastating illness, especially when all the other public health measures have been stripped away. To do so is to effectively bar people who want to stay safe from public life, and to force Covid exposure on us more than is already happening anytime we must use public spaces by necessity.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Maria C?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Andrea  
Ortega.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Caprice  
Rines.

MS. RINES: Psalms 1226 says, pray  
for the peace of Jerusalem, they that do  
will prosper. Now I'm disappointed  
because I'm a proud Republican. I was a  
conservative, then I became a Republican.  
But what happened in this room today, we  
owe that young lady an apology. Because  
that law is going to target young black  
men. Now, we do have to come up with a  
solution. My friend said, make clear  
masks. That's a good idea. I think I'm  
going to invent it. I think I'll be rich.

I love my Jewish brothers and  
sisters. And I love my Palestinian

1  
2 brothers. I love my brothers and sisters  
3 in general. And I think that it's not the  
4 problem. The problem is let's come up  
5 with a legislation to get everybody out  
6 of debt. Let's do that, because then we  
7 don't have to protest. Because we  
8 protesting for for reasons because people  
9 don't have jobs and that's what's  
10 happening.

11 So I would say that -- because you  
12 saw what happened. Mr. Kopel, you waited  
13 till she finished, and then you called  
14 the police to escort her out. But when  
15 that other lady went over, you didn't  
16 call the police to escort her. When the  
17 other lady jumped up and was yelling and  
18 screaming and hollering, you didn't call  
19 the police escort her. And I don't think  
20 you realize it. It's our own biases.

21 So I think that we have to fix this.  
22 We have to fix our biases. My mother --  
23 if y'all were my kids, I would lock you  
24 in the room until you came to an  
25 agreement. That's what y'all going to do.



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I'm going to tell our county exec to lock you in the room until you come to an agreement.

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Now I'm for Sands. We need to find jobs. Let's do that. We need to do that.

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And I'm saying it because I've been on Long Island 57 years in October, and now

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I want to someplace I can go on a date with a nice man who can take me and have

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dinner, a nice massage. Let's make it

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happen. I'm tired of paying taxes on something.

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Mr. Solages, you know my family

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helped you come become a legislator,

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right? So let's do it. Because we need

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something. I'm tired of paying taxes on

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that property.

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I have no respect for Garden City.

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Stop listening to Garden City because

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they owe \$1 million for discrimination

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right now and they ain't paid their debt

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yet. So until they pay their debt, until

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they pay their debt and let some black

people move in Garden City, they need to

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shut up.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Meta  
Mereday.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Paul Budd.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We are  
done with public comment on this item.  
And we will now proceed to a vote on the  
item. Before we do that, Legislator  
Gaylor moves to close the hearing --

(Whereupon, public members  
indicate they still want to be  
heard.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We didn't  
call you. You want to talk? Come on up.  
Not casino.

MS. THILLET: Hi. Sorry. I don't  
mean to be rude, but you did say everyone  
would get a chance to be heard, and I've  
been here since 1:00. Thank you very  
much.

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My name is Danyell Thillet. I'm here from Queens. I was going to say good afternoon, but now I'll say good evening.

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I'm a disabled person with chronic illness and a compromised immune system. If you weren't able to automatically and accurately infer that about me, then there's no logic behind the so-called Mask Transparency Act. This bill gives law enforcement the power to determine who is and who is not wearing a mask for a medical reason. It also gives them authority to assume the intent of mask wearer and preemptively treat them like a criminal, even when no crime has actually been committed.

This bill will ultimately serve to increase the arbitrary harassment of disabled people and our allies, as we've already seen in these proceedings, and limit our ability to move about the world while keeping ourselves protected. It will require disabled people and our allies to constantly prove that we are

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disabled enough, or have a good enough reason for medical masks in settings where law enforcement daemon unnecessary based, of course, on no medical training.

My partner, who has no disabilities, wears a mask to help keep me protected. Many able bodied, healthy people mask every day to be able to stay that way and keep people they love safe. So it becomes even harder to maintain a medical exemption when it can and should extend to everyone and anyone.

This bill will also increase the arbitrary harassment of members of the LGBTQ community and people of color. They being the most likely individuals to be assumed to have ill intent based on historic and current behavior of law enforcement.

The repeated use of the word thug in this room today, a racially loaded term, goes to prove my point. The fact that officers in this room have treated the masked half differently than the other

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half also proves my point.

Additionally, this bill seeks to diminish the ability of disabled people and our allies to participate in government proceedings, further evidenced by the denial of a request for Zoom access to participate virtually for those too ill or vulnerable to attend in person.

This bill also aims to limit our legal right to protest at a time where law enforcement assumes that the only distinction between protesters and rioters is a matter of time. All people wearing a mask for Covid protection and a political demonstration are presumed to have nefarious intent.

This country has generally turned its collective back in the needs of the disabled community during the seemingly never ending pandemic. I've personally been told countless times that if I'm afraid of Covid, I should just stay home. And since Covid isn't going anywhere,

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2 such a suggestion seems to extend to the  
3 rest of my life. This bill echoes that  
4 sentiment. It tells me that I am less  
5 welcome in spaces like this, more  
6 suspicious when practicing my civil  
7 rights, and less of a citizen than those  
8 who use no mitigation and cause harm to  
9 the community through that passivity.

10 By the way, the air and CO2 readings  
11 in this room are well into the danger  
12 zone. Just thought it was worth  
13 mentioning.

14 Anyway, please do the right thing,  
15 vote against this bill and for the love  
16 of God, mask up.

17 Thank you.

18 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right.  
19 Before we go ahead and close the hearing,  
20 anyone else who wants to speak on the  
21 mask law, who has not yet been heard on  
22 the mask law. Richard, on the mask law,  
23 nothing else. Okay, I'm not talking about  
24 busses now.

25 Legislator Gaylor moves to close the

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hearing, Legislator Ferretti seconds the motion.

All those in favor of closing the hearing, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed to closing the hearing?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. The hearing is closed.

I'm calling a local law to prohibit the use of a mask or facial covering for the purposes of concealing an individual's identity in a public place.

Motion by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt, seconded by Legislator Mazi Pilip.

Now we have a motion by, Mr. Koslow. Why don't you go ahead, please?

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

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As stated earlier today, I'd like to renew my motion to table this item for purposes of discussing with both sides of the table to try and resolve this.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: I second the motion.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: And it is seconded.

Now, as I mentioned a little bit earlier, a motion to table does not have debate. So therefore all those in favor of the motion to table please say, "Aye".

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
Aye.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Aye.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right.  
So that's all seven.

Those opposed?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: No.



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LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: No.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: No.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: No.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: No.

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: No.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: No.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: No.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: No.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: No.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: No.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: No.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: The motion  
is defeated 12 to 7.

Amendment in the nature of the  
substitution. The amendment, by the way,  
just for your information, is what I  
discussed earlier when I made my initial  
statement and that is the changes that  
were made in the initial filing to  
accommodate, we believe, some of the  
views of the Minority.

Moved by Legislator Pilip, seconded  
by Legislator Gaylor, the amendment. And  
we're voting on the amendment only now.

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And those in favor of the amendment  
please say, "Aye".

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Aye.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Aye.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those  
abstaining.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Aye.

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LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Aye.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Aye.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Aye.

The amendment passes 12-0-7.

Now, a motion on the item, as amended -- all those in favor of the item as amended.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Aye.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Aye.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any

opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those abstaining.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Presiding Officer, I just want to make one quick statement that will reflect the vote of the caucus, our caucus here.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Do you want to vote and then make the statement?

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Can I make it first?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Make it first.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Okay. Thank you. The majority has conceded that our alternative bill quite possibly augments and enhances the amended bill. And, you know, one that is entitled us -- they have admitted, that we as the Legislative Body is directed to pump the brakes and make sure that what we are in a rush to do is not fraught with problems that will lead to protracted legal challenges and cost our taxpayers thousands of dollars. This is not the way to govern. We will be

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abdicating our obligations by simply rubber stamping this bill. We owe the taxpayers that much. Let's take our time.

For that reason, we are abstaining because we will take the Majority Leader at his word that he will consider our alternative bill and give it the consideration it deserves and the Nassau residents are entitled to.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right. Are you all abstaining?

(Whereupon, confirmed.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: So it's 12-0-7. And let me just say, for the record, before we leave the matter is that. Yes, I did say we would consider that, but I don't believe anyone here conceded that it is improvement. We would look at it. And we took your word for it that it's an improvement. I haven't had a chance to read it yet. It was only filed today. So I don't really know. And we don't have to pass it to know what's in it.

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MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Can I just suggest that if it does get overturned, that we sit down together and go over this in a way that would be illegal?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Sure. Of course.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Because I totally anticipate that. And I think that it would be a good time for us to really go through that.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That will be just fine. Absolutely. If it should happen.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

I'm pretty sure it will.

MINORITY LEADER DERIGGI-WHITTON:

All right. Thank you everyone.

The item passes by a vote of 12-0-7.

All those who stayed all this time.

Thank you. Those who are disappointed, understand this is how democracy works.

(Whereupon, recess.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We have a few items. To call now. Yes. We're going to start out, Legislator Giuffre had something that he needed to put on the record regarding his earlier point of privilege.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Just as a matter of record, I want to acknowledge which I was supposed to do earlier. My constituents, who brought Mr. Quinonez to my attention. And that would be the Mayor and Board of Trustees of the Village of Garden City who were present here, and one who was not, Trustee Tai, who was not here today, but, wanted to be here. So I want to acknowledge them and thank them for bringing Mr. Quinonez to our attention. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We'll start out with Ordinance 28, which is an ordinance making certain determinations pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act and the SEQRA implementing regulations with respect to an agreement of lease by and between the County of Nassau and LVS NY HoldCo2, LLC, as tenant, in connection with the leasing of the Nassau County Veterans Memorial Coliseum property in Uniondale, Hempstead, County and Nassau, state of New York, Section 44, Block F, Lots 351, 411, 412 and 415, and to, among other things, facilitate development of the Sands New York Integrated Resort on such property.

Motion by Deputy Presiding Officer McKevitt, seconded by Legislator Mule.

Now we have an amendment in the nature of a substitution, which updates the item to provide additional information regarding scoping and the



1  
2 positive declarations documents,  
3 specifically. The public scoping meeting  
4 will be held on Monday, September 9th at  
5 5 p.m. in this Chamber. The written  
6 comment period on the draft scope, which  
7 must be submitted by LVS, will remain  
8 open until September 19th. The draft  
9 scope will be posted online within five  
10 days after the Legislature's receipt of  
11 it.

12 Motion on the amendment is by  
13 Legislator Ferretti and seconded by  
14 Legislator Bynoe.

15 We're going to vote on the amendment  
16 only at this point. All those in favor of  
17 the amendment, please say, "Aye".

18 (Whereupon, all members of  
19 the Full Nassau County  
20 Legislature respond in favor  
21 with, "Aye".)

22 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

23 (Whereupon, no verbal  
24 response.)

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. That

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item passes unanimously.

Now we'll go to Ordinance 29, which makes certain determinations pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act and the SEQRA implementing regulation with respect to an agreement of lease by and between County of Nassau, as landlord, and LVS NY HoldCo2, LLC, as tenant, in connection with the leasing of the Nassau County Veterans Memorial Coliseum property located in Uniondale, to allow the use, occupancy, operation, maintenance and security of the existing Coliseum property, and authorizing the County Executive of the County of Nassau to execute a lease and all other pertinent documents, and to take other actions to consummate the aforesaid agreement of lease.

Motion by Legislator Giuffre,  
seconded by Legislator Koslow.

Now there's an amendment. Once again, the nature of a substitution, which updates Appendix A to include the

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approved and signed Planning Commission Resolution.

Motion on the amendment by Legislator Mullaney, and seconded by Minority Leader Delia DeRiggi-Whitton.

Now, vote on the amendment only. All those in favor of the amendment please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Nassau County Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That item, the amendment, is unanimous.

Now we have a presentation from the Administration on these items. Mr. Meyer, you're up.

MR. MEYER: Thank you very much, Presiding Officer. You've earned your money today, that's for sure, this Body has. Appreciate it very much.

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Our numbers that we have for our presentation are 172 of 24 and 173 of 24. So now they are 28 and 29; is that my understanding?

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Those are the ordinance numbers, not the item numbers.

MR. MEYER: Okay. Great.

My name is Josh Meyer, partner at West Group Law, outside counsel for the County on the negotiation of these two leases. Our address is 81 Main Street, White Plains, New York, 10601.

So this evening, I'm here to provide you with an overview of the ordinances before you today, both of which involve the Nassau Coliseum site, as well as an overview of the State Environmental Quality Review Act and a description of each of the steps in the environmental review process that will be conducted by the County Legislature for each of the ordinances.

As a brief overview of the Long Term

1  
2 Lease, 172 of 24, this is a proposed  
3 lease that would permit LVS to perform  
4 operation, maintenance, repair,  
5 management and security responsibilities  
6 for the Coliseum and surrounding  
7 premises. It would also allow them to  
8 redevelop the Coliseum and surrounding  
9 premises, which may include a casino,  
10 hotel and other uses.

11 This ordinance provides for certain  
12 determinations to be made in accordance  
13 with the State Environmental Quality  
14 Review Act, otherwise known as SEQRA, and  
15 begin the environmental review process.  
16 Importantly, this ordinance does not  
17 authorize the County Executive to execute  
18 the lease.

19 Ordinance 173 of 24, which we refer  
20 to as the Operational Lease, will permit  
21 LVS to perform operation, maintenance,  
22 repair, management and security  
23 responsibilities at the Coliseum and the  
24 surrounding premises. Importantly, this  
25 lease does not authorize any development

1  
2 or redevelopment on the site, nor does it  
3 authorize the operation of a casino. This  
4 ordinance also provides for certain  
5 determinations to be made in accordance  
6 with SEQRA, and authorizes the County  
7 Executive to execute this lease.

8 So if I can begin with 173 of 24,  
9 the Operational Lease. Again, this will  
10 allow LVS to assume sole responsibility  
11 for the security condition, operation,  
12 maintenance, repair and management of the  
13 Coliseum and the surrounding premises.  
14 The term is an initial term of 27 years,  
15 with three additional terms of five years  
16 each. The term of the lease with the  
17 prior tenant was for 34 years, with three  
18 five year renewals. That was entered into  
19 in 2017, so seven years have elapsed on  
20 that lease, and so that's why this lease,  
21 which is effectively a continuation of  
22 that term, is for 27 years. Under the  
23 terms of this lease, LVS cannot renovate  
24 or expand the Coliseum, and the lease  
25 explicitly provides that it does not

1  
2 authorize any development or  
3 redevelopment of the site in any manner.

4 During the first two lease years,  
5 LVS is required to keep the Coliseum open  
6 and operating, required to use  
7 commercially reasonable efforts to cause  
8 the Coliseum to have programing and/or  
9 events reasonably consistent with past  
10 practice.

11 Beginning with the third lease year,  
12 the tenant has the right to cease the  
13 ongoing operation of the Coliseum and go  
14 dark.

15 LVS has the right to sublet the  
16 premises, or assign the lease and enter  
17 into no more than five severance leases  
18 for portions of the premises.

19 For each of the first three lease  
20 years, LVS will pay the County a  
21 nonrefundable annual payment in the  
22 amount of \$10 million. In the event that  
23 they terminate the lease prior to the  
24 last day of the third lease year, the  
25 County may immediately accelerate LVS'

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payment obligations for the remainder of the first three lease years.

LVS will pay rent to the County in the amount of \$1 per year for the first three lease years, and \$5 million per year thereafter, as escalated.

LVS will also pay a nonrefundable one time fixed payment to the County for the tenant's use and occupancy of the premises in the amount of \$1 million.

LVS will also pay the County \$900,000 per year for the County's provision of exterior police and security at the site.

The approval process for the Operational Lease was as follows:

On June 18th, there was an OSPAC meeting where the project was introduced to them;

On June 20th, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the lease;

On July 10th, OSPAC reviewed the hearing transcript and determined that



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the proposal had no impact on County open space or parks or any areas of cultural, archeological habitat, or historic, or of an otherwise environmentally sensitive nature. It was recommended that the Planning Commission recommend the proposal to the Legislature without condition;

On July 18th, the Planning Commission recommended that this Body determined that the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that they should complete the review of the proposed action under SEQRA by issuing a negative declaration and approve the proposal without condition;

On July 22nd, this ordinance was presented to the Rules Committee and forwarded to the Full Legislature;

At today's meeting, pursuant to this ordinance, the Legislature is considering designating itself as Lead Agency, classifying the proposed action as an

1  
2 unlisted action, issuing a negative  
3 declaration, which is a determination  
4 that the proposed action will have no  
5 significant adverse environmental  
6 impacts, and authorizing the County  
7 Executive to execute the proposed lease.

8 So, on the Long Term Lease Ordinance  
9 172 of 24, the County is considering  
10 entering into this Long Term Lease with  
11 LVS New York HoldCo2, LLC, the same  
12 entity under the Operational Lease, for  
13 the Coliseum and the surrounding  
14 premises.

15 The proposed lease would permit LVS  
16 to perform operation, maintenance,  
17 repair, management and security  
18 responsibilities for the Coliseum and the  
19 surrounding premises. They can redevelop  
20 the Coliseum and surrounding premises,  
21 which may include a casino, hotel and  
22 other uses.

23 Pursuant to the ordinance, the  
24 County Legislature intends to, as part of  
25 the required SEQRA review of the proposed

1  
2 action, designate itself as Lead Agency  
3 for the SEQRA review, classify the  
4 proposed action under the SEQRA  
5 implementing regulations, and make a  
6 determination of environmental  
7 significance for the proposed action.

8 Ordinance 172 of 24 does not  
9 authorize the County Executive to execute  
10 the lease. That will not occur until the  
11 environmental review process concludes,  
12 which is anticipated to occur in the  
13 second quarter of 2025.

14 Pursuant to the term sheet for the  
15 Long Term Lease, the term would be for 99  
16 years. LVS will have the ability to  
17 utilize existing improvements on the site  
18 as follows:

19 Use and operate the Coliseum in a  
20 manner consistent with the pre effective  
21 date use and operation;

22 Cease ongoing operations and go  
23 dark;

24 Renovate, repurpose or redevelop the  
25 Coliseum to be operated for public

1  
2 entertainment and/or recreation or as a  
3 conference facility, hotel gaming and/or  
4 parimutuel wagering and/or lottery venue,  
5 or entertainment venue;

6 They can demolish the Coliseum  
7 and/or use the Coliseum for any other  
8 lawful purposes related to the foregoing.

9 Pursuant to the terms sheet, LVS  
10 will have the ability to develop the  
11 following permitted uses for new  
12 improvements on the site:

13 Public entertainment and/or  
14 recreation;

15 A conference facility, hotel, gaming  
16 and/or parimutuel wagering and/or lottery  
17 venue or entertainment venue;

18 Hospital and/or medical uses;

19 Class A office space;

20 Residential development and use, and  
21 other related business or commercial  
22 purposes;

23 In the event, LVS is awarded a  
24 license for the casino, it will pursue a  
25 development in accordance with the terms

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of the license and the final application.  
If a license is not awarded to LVS, it will pursue the development of a mixed use complex with a hotel branded as a Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis or other reasonably equivalent branded hotel up to 500 residences, an entertainment venue containing at least 3600 seats, and any other lawful use;

There will be an annual rent of \$5 million, which will increase to \$10 million upon the commencement of casino operation;

The County will also receive an annual public safety payment of \$900,000, which will increase to \$1.8 million upon the commencement of the casino operation;

The tenant will pay the County a minimum amount of \$25 million for the gaming tax revenue guarantee, which will increase to \$50 million;

The tenant will also fund a Community Benefits Program with no less than \$2 million annually commencing on

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the opening of the casino, which will increase to \$4 million annually during the term;

The County anticipates receiving General Municipal Law Section 239-F fees of no less than \$8.75 million.

Some additional provisions in the lease are:

Union labor. The existing improvements will continue to be operated using union labor;

There will be a Project Labor Agreement that LVS will be required to enter into with the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, AFL-CIO, and its constituent local unions;

There will be the Community Benefits Program, designed to ensure that LVS helps address the needs of the surrounding area;

LVS will be required to construct, at its expense, the core and shell of a freestanding police substation of

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approximately 1500 square feet.

And with that, I'll turn it over to my colleague John Wagner, who will discuss the SEQRA environmental review process.

MR. WAGNER: Good evening. My name is John Wagner. I'm an attorney with the firm Certilman, Balin, Adler & Hyman, offices at 100 Motor Parkway, Hauppauge, New York.

I'm going to just focus on the SEQRA aspects of what we're doing tonight. As some of you may be aware, the SEQRA review process for both re-releases has already commenced, on July 2nd, specifically, because there are multiple involved agencies for both of these re-releases. Coordination letters were sent out to all involved agencies with appropriate materials accompanying those letters. The purpose of the coordination letter was to determine if any of the involved agencies desire to serve as Lead Agency for SEQRA purposes, which would

1  
2 give them responsibility for the SEQRA  
3 process.

4 It was also indicated in that  
5 coordination letter that the County  
6 Legislature intended to designate itself  
7 as SEQRA Lead Agency, and thus conduct  
8 the SEQRA process for both of these  
9 leases.

10 The period for the involved agencies  
11 to respond to that letter by expressing  
12 interest in becoming Lead Agency has now  
13 expired, and as a result, the Legislature  
14 is now free to go ahead and designate  
15 lead agency.

16 Talking about each of the specific  
17 ordinances; 172-24, this is the one that  
18 refers to the so-called Long Term or  
19 Integrated Resort Lease. This particular  
20 ordinance that you have in front of you,  
21 gives you the ability to declare the  
22 Legislature as Lead Agency. You can do  
23 that tonight, for the proposed action.

24 Furthermore, you can classify the  
25 proposed action under SEQRA, which is



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another responsibility you have. You would classify it as either a Type I, Type II or unlisted action. Those are the three categories for SEQRA actions.

The third thing you would want to do is issue a determination of environmental significance. These are the three things that you can do for each of the leases tonight.

So, what a determination of environmental significance is, is basically a determination whether or not the proposed action in that particular re-lease has the potential for at least one significant adverse environmental impact. If it doesn't have any significant potential environmental impact, you would be issuing a negative declaration. If it may have one or more significant adverse impacts, then you would issue a positive declaration, and I'll explain what that means later.

The second ordinance we're considering tonight 173-24 is for the

1  
2 Operational Lease. Again, you have that  
3 ability to declare the Legislature as  
4 Lead Agency tonight to classify the  
5 action under SEQRA as Type I, Type II, or  
6 unlisted, and to also issue your  
7 determination of environmental  
8 significance; negative declaration or  
9 positive declaration.

10 Now, that's what you can do. You'll  
11 find when you review these ordinances  
12 that the possibility is certainly there,  
13 to declare yourselves Lead Agency, and it  
14 provides that in each of the draft  
15 ordinances that are presented for both of  
16 the proposed actions.

17 In addition, with respect to  
18 classification of the proposed actions,  
19 one of the ordinances recommends that the  
20 Operational Lease be declared an unlisted  
21 action, which means that it's subject to  
22 SEQRA review, but it's more likely than  
23 not to require an environmental impact  
24 statement.

25 For the second Long Term Lease, the

1  
2           ordinances provide for you to classify  
3           that one as a Type I action. The reason  
4           for that is that there are certain  
5           thresholds and the SEQRA regulations that  
6           that make certain actions that the DEC  
7           has designated to possibly have a more  
8           likely impact on the environment and,  
9           therefore, to require, more likely, an  
10          environmental impact statement.

11                 So given the fact that the Long Term  
12          Lease includes a substantial potential  
13          development of the property,  
14          redevelopment of the property, whereas  
15          the Operational Lease does not allow  
16          that, in the case of the Long Term Lease,  
17          the ordinance is proposed to classify  
18          that one as a Type I action, which again,  
19          it means that it's more likely than not  
20          to require an environmental impact  
21          statement.

22                 Now, with respect to the ordinance  
23          that has to do with the Operational  
24          Lease, you would be then proceeding to  
25          issue a determination of environmental

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significance. That, as I said, is either a negative declaration or positive declaration. Now, based upon the review of the proposed lease, which is already available for your review, and the environmental assessment forms that have been prepared for that proposed action, the ordinance recommends that a negative declaration be issued for that. And the primary reason for that is that the lease expressly does not allow for any development or redevelopment of the site. It just allows for the ongoing maintenance and security and upkeep of the Coliseum building as it exists today.

With respect to the Long Term Lease, the ordinances provide for you to adopt a positive declaration. And the reason for that is that the environmental assessment form materials and the terms of the lease -- the lease terms that are before you -- indicate that there's potential significant impacts resulting from proposed future development under that

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lease. That could include the casino, it could include other alternative development. But you're going to have to evaluate each of those potential impacts.

Now, as Josh mentioned earlier, if you issue a negative declaration tonight for the Operational Lease, as the ordinances proposed, you're then free to go ahead. SEQRA is effectively done at that point, the issuance of a negative declaration terminates the SEQRA process for the Operational Lease. You are then free to go ahead and authorize the County Executive to execute that lease, and the ordinance does provide that.

With respect to the Long Term Lease, what the positive declaration will do, which is encompassed in the proposed ordinance, is it will initiate an environmental impact statement process, which is going to go on for a while. The purpose of that is to assess the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts that can result

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2 from that lease and the future  
3 development that's proposed in that lease  
4 or contemplated in that lease.

5 So just to give you a quick summary  
6 of what that will involve in the positive  
7 declaration, which is on the table and is  
8 there for your consideration, among other  
9 things, the positive declaration includes  
10 specifics of what we call a scoping  
11 meeting. That's the first step down the  
12 road toward the environmental impact  
13 statement. The scoping meeting is to be  
14 scheduled for September 9th, and it  
15 provides the public an opportunity to  
16 make their thoughts known with respect to  
17 the content of the environmental impact  
18 statement that will be generated. Before  
19 that scoping meeting takes place, LVS  
20 Sands, is going to propose a draft scope,  
21 which is typical. An Applicant usually  
22 submits a draft scope.

23 The purpose of the scoping meeting  
24 is to give the public an opportunity to  
25 review the draft scope for a few days,

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and then come in and make their opinions known as to whether they agree with the draft scope being comprehensive and complete, or they have additional things they'd like to add or even say there are some things that shouldn't be in the scope, but they get to comment on it.

The next process after that is that the Legislature and its consultants will consider the comments that are received, and they will be received not only at the scoping meeting, but there will also be an additional period of ten days after the meeting for people to submit written comments. All of those comments, both at the meeting and also as received in written form, will then be taken into account and a final scope will be prepared. That is the start of the real EIS process, because that provides the table of contents for what must be in the DEIS document for that document ultimately to be complete. So that's the first step that's coming up very soon.

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Once the scoping process is done and a final scope has been issued, the Applicant will basically get to work on preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, DEIS, which is going to have to examine each of the potentially significant impacts that have already been identified in the positive declaration that will be issued today. Once that's done, it's submitted to your consultants to review.

The next step is that this Legislature and its consultants must determine that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, DEIS, contains sufficient information on each of the areas to be examined as to be complete and ready for public review. It is a process that goes back and forth where it's reviewed and only when you are satisfied that there's enough information in there to put it before the public, do you make a determination that the DEIS is complete and adequate for public review.



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Once that happens, there is a process for the public again, just like they did with the scope, the public has an opportunity to review and to comment upon the DEIS that will typically be by means of a DEIS hearing that will take place. The public has an opportunity to come in and speak their piece about the DEIS, based upon their own review of the DEIS.

After those comments are received and a transcript of the comments from the hearing is prepared and all written comments are compiled that come in, they will be provided to the Applicant and a final environmental impact statement is prepared; it's called an FEIS. What that is is, it incorporates the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and it also includes responses to all of the substantive questions and comments that have been raised during the hearing process on the DEIS.

The FEIS will then be adopted or

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2 issued by the Legislature. After that,  
3 there'll be a period of time as what we  
4 call a public consideration period, a  
5 brief public consideration period for the  
6 public to consider the FEIS and all the  
7 answers that are given therein.

8 And then the final step of the  
9 process is, the Legislature will be in a  
10 position to issue what's called the  
11 Findings Statement, which is the  
12 culmination of the EIS process. In that  
13 statement, there will be very specific  
14 findings as to each of the identified  
15 potentially significant impacts and how  
16 the Applicant is going to mitigate them,  
17 if possible, or eliminate them, if  
18 needed, and will also include any  
19 conditions that might have to be imposed  
20 to ensure that the proposed project will  
21 be the least obtrusive when it comes to  
22 environmental impacts. That Findings  
23 Statement also has to be adopted by the  
24 Legislature at the end of the day. When  
25 that is issued, that will complete the

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responsibilities of the Legislature with respect to the SEQRA process. There will be other agencies, obviously, beyond the Legislature -- Oh, just one other thing. Once that Findings Statement is issued, the Legislature will be in a position then, and only then, to authorize the execution of the Long Term Lease. Until then, we have to go through the process. We have to thoroughly review the impacts. It's going to take a while to do that.

When this Board issues its Findings Statement, there are, obviously, as you as you're aware, there are other agencies involved besides the Legislature. For example, there's going to have to be zoning approvals issued by the Town of Hempstead, because that's the jurisdiction that the project lies within. The Town of Hempstead will have to issue approvals too. There are several involved agencies and each of those involved agencies before they issue their own approvals, have to issue their own

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separate Findings Statement. That's what they have to do as far as SEQRA goes.

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Typically, they will use your Findings

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Statement and go from there. They may

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just adopt it verbatim or they may add to

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it. But that's the process to get all the

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approvals in place for this project at

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the end of the day, not only your

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approvals, but the approvals of the other

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involved agencies.

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So that's the whole process. If you

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have any questions, I'll be happy to

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address them.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any

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questions? Legislator Ferretti.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you,

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gentlemen, for your presentation. It is

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very informative. It sounds to me like --

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correct me if I'm wrong -- the process

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that we're about to proceed with is

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essentially exactly what the Court

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ordered us to do, correct?

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MR. WAGNER: Yes. The Court has

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directed not only that and other

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environmental review be done, but has directed basically the Legislature to do the review. It's not something that we typically do, but the Court has directed us to be the SEQRA big gun on this one.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Understood. I did see when looking through the slips of those who are going to be speaking today, that there are representatives from Hofstra University that are here, planning on speaking, and I would hope that they would certainly address the fact that we are proceeding exactly how the Court ordered us to do that. We're conducting a transparent environmental review before making a decision. Hopefully, they will address that and they will also indicate whether or not they are for this 27 year lease. And quite frankly, if they're not, are they looking to litigate the lease, which provides no rights for the Sands to develop anything but would put all the workers that are currently employed there

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out of work. And lastly, if they speak, I hope to hear what their plans for economic development are at the Hub.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer.

Thank you for your presentation. I have a few questions that I realize were addressed in the Rules Committee, but this is the Full Legislature.

So my question is, the SEQRA process that began with the Town of Hempstead in January, that was with the Town as Lead Agency. Will that work be used in this process or are we starting over again?

MR. WAGNER: I'm sure that we will be reviewing whatever the Town has already reviewed. We do have to go through the process ourselves. That's one of the fundamental things with SEQRA, is that the Lead Agency is responsible for administering the process and cannot delegate that responsibility. It must take it on itself, and certainly you can

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use whatever information is out there to inform yourselves throughout the process. And I would expect that we and our consultants will certainly review studies and other analyses that were done as part of the Town's review process, some of which may still be valid.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: But the process basically has to begin anew with us, the Legislature, as the Lead Agency?

MR. WAGNER: That's correct. Yes. We've reset the clock on that. So you're starting from scratch.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: All right. You already went through the timeline. Who's paying the cost of the SEQRA process, which includes any costs for consultants?

MR. WAGNER: The SEQRA process, as is typical, will be paid for by the Applicant. This is typical because most municipalities have what we call pass through legislation, which provides that the Applicant must bear the costs of the reviewing agency throughout the process.

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LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: And during the SEQRA process, the timeline that you outlined, is it fair to say that there'll be public notice? Residents will be given notice of various hearings and opportunities to participate and comment?

MR. WAGNER: Yes. We have very specific rules that we have to operate under SEQRA. There are all kinds of notice requirements. Just to give you one example, when we finally reached a determination that the DEIS is complete and adequate for public review, we have to provide notice of a public hearing on that; there's a timeframe for doing that. But the public is notified all along the way. And as I say, they have multiple opportunities to come forward and have their opinions heard and considered.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.

We'll go straight to the public comment section. All right. We'll start off with Matty Aracich.



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Matty, good to see you again.

MR. ARACICH: Good evening, Mr. Presiding Officer, members of the Legislature. Joining me are two members of ASM, which are actually the people who are working at the Coliseum.

The Building Trades and Labor stands in support of the SEQRA and the continuation of the lease that goes to Sands. The reason is both of these individuals will go ahead and work there. Behind me are those that are looking to support Sands, those that know that the economic development in this county is the thing that will drive the county into the future.

Look, we have to look at this objectively, we understand. But we look at something different. The Building Trades model is something completely on its own, which means we try to make projects, we try to make sure they're high class jobs with high class wages, with the same with benefits, a retirement

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job, security. That's what provided to these individuals here. If we didn't go ahead and move that lease forward, these people would be out of a job. And it's not just a job, it's a career, a career they spent many years on having. Four hundred people would have those careers. What do we do to replace them? Just to swipe and it's gone. That's an unconscionable action.

I look at this with a different position. In Nassau County, there were four parcels of land which didn't generate any income for the County. Number one Belmont; look what it's doing now. Number two, you look at Long Beach, which is a superblock; look what it's doing now. Three, Cerro Wire; look what it's doing now. And then this one will be the cream of the crop, because this one is going to generate more income than all of them. That's what's important. Getting people from the disadvantaged community into these jobs. Make it so

1  
2 everybody has an opportunity, not just  
3 some. Making sure that those people who  
4 want a job can have a job. Those people  
5 that want to have a career can have a  
6 career. They can retire here. And this is  
7 going to be something that, aside from  
8 the 8500 jobs that some of the projects  
9 are going to create, that's why it's  
10 important to move this lease forward.  
11 It's imperative to make sure that you  
12 have a fiscal responsibility for the  
13 County.

14 We're looking at turmoil, what's  
15 happening right now both in the world and  
16 the United States' finances. This is  
17 something where a company has come in,  
18 moved with the community, moved with the  
19 people in the community, the faith  
20 groups, the MBE, the WMBEs, the SDVOB,  
21 all of these people who want to have this  
22 opportunity to want to live home, to want  
23 to not have to travel into the City or  
24 farther east.

25 Look, it's imperative that all the

1  
2 things we do, we do together. Together is  
3 the only way we make it here. I've said  
4 before, it's unconscionable if someone  
5 makes a move to go ahead and stop this  
6 because it's a vote against labor. At the  
7 last committee meeting, you heard  
8 opposition for Sands, and I said, if  
9 there were 400 professors that were going  
10 out of work, I'd fight for them too. And  
11 the only vote against this was from your  
12 minority leader, and that's  
13 unconscionable.

14 MR. STANTON: For the record, the  
15 rest of us respect your time. We won't be  
16 speaking. Thank you for your service.

17 MR. ARACICH: Thank you very much.

18 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Carline  
19 Reimers.

20 (Whereupon, no verbal  
21 response.)

22 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Patrick  
23 Dowden.

24 (Whereupon, no verbal  
25 response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Brian  
Nigro.

(Whereupon, states for  
Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Halima  
Owens.

(Whereupon, states for  
Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: That  
works. Thank you.

Robert Wilson.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Deborah  
Izzo.

(Whereupon, states for  
Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Diane Motherway.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Julie  
Cody.

(Whereupon, no verbal

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response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ed Carr.

(Whereupon, states for  
Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ida  
Palmeri.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ray Goger.

(Whereupon, states for  
Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Chris Jacobs.

MR. JACOBS: Thank you. Good  
evening. Chris Jacobs, local Uniondale  
resident. Hi.

As a Uniondale resident, I have many  
questions and concerns regarding the  
SEQRA review and lease transfer in  
relation to the Nassau Coliseum site.

As stated before, Uniondale, along  
with Hempstead, Roosevelt, New Cassel,  
and Freeport have all been identified by  
the New York State Department of

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Environmental Conservation as disadvantaged communities. The New York State DEC has concluded that these communities are burdened with an excessive amount of air pollution, primarily caused by high vehicle traffic, leading to higher than normal asthma and respiratory illness rates among youths aged 0 to 17 years old who reside in these communities.

Nassau County is burdened with daily gridlock due to inadequate road networks, substandard public transit options, and restrictive highways. Many areas, including Nassau Coliseum site, have been labeled transit deserts due to the sparse public transit options, making it mandatory to commute to and from these locations primarily by personal vehicle.

The closest highway to the Coliseum site is the Meadowbrook Parkway, which prohibits commercial vehicles, including large trucks and busses, from traveling on them. The result is all trucks and

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2           busses traveling to and from the Coliseum  
3           site must utilize our smaller local  
4           roads, which traverse through our  
5           residential communities, adding to our  
6           already overburdened roads. It is  
7           projected that this proposed project  
8           would add 30,000 plus vehicles daily to  
9           our roadways.

10                   Finally, Uniondale is still awaiting  
11           its two public town hall meetings hosted  
12           by elected officials, as required by the  
13           New York State Gaming Commission. To  
14           date, Uniondale has had zero public town  
15           hall meetings with residents to inform  
16           and answer questions regarding this large  
17           scale proposal to potentially be in place  
18           in our community.

19                   A question I have that has yet to be  
20           answered is, how does adding 30,000 plus  
21           more vehicles daily to overcrowded roads  
22           mitigate our air pollution crisis,  
23           particularly in identified disadvantaged  
24           communities, as well as alleviate our  
25           daily gridlock burning plaguing Nassau



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County?

Have a great evening.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
Richard Catalano.

MR. CATALANO: There are ten members of this Legislature who are attorneys, and I would like to address you. You have a special responsibility to uphold our laws.

Last year, this Legislature approved the lease with Sands that despite numerous statements from us, the opposition, that it required environmental review, you went forward and did it anyway, and, obviously, the courts agreed with us.

Unfortunately, the County is starting over with a new lease agreement that also will not survive a court challenge. There are a number of reasons for it:

The lease agreement is for 42 years, rather than a much shorter period, if the sole objective was to save union jobs for

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at least two years;

The payments for the first three years are referred to as transition payments. Obviously, it's transitioning to a casino lease to anybody who reads the lease;

The amount of the transition payments don't make economic sense if you read the lease. You cannot sign a lease if you don't understand the underlying economics, it's Law 101;

LVS also has the ability to transfer the lease without the approval of the County for 42 years. You're giving them control of the property for 42 years;

They can make it go dark in two years and let it be abandoned for ten years until maybe there's another referendum to build another casino.

Clearly, Las Vegas Sands believes that this lease will not survive a court challenge. They recently launched a very offensive PR campaign against Hofstra University, a Long Island institution

1  
2 since 1935, an institution that has  
3 enriched the lives of hundreds of  
4 thousands of Long Islanders, including  
5 Legislators Bynoe, McKevitt, Ferretti,  
6 Davis, Gaylor and our favorite one,  
7 DeRiggi-Whitton, including myself, who  
8 attended Hofstra in 1982.

9           *Newsday* just reported that it's  
10 going to be a six figure digital ad  
11 campaign attacking Hofstra. It is  
12 absolutely the height of hypocrisy for  
13 this corporation that's been lobbying all  
14 of you to knock down the Coliseum, and  
15 eliminate the 400 jobs. Now they want to  
16 blame Hofstra for the problem; it's  
17 obscene.

18           I only ask, as attorneys, that the  
19 ten of you must maintain the integrity  
20 and the competence of our legal system.  
21 None of you should be voting for a lease  
22 that is probably going to be determined  
23 to be illegal.

24           And finally, I'll leave you with one  
25 thought. Don't just stand by and let this

1  
2 out-of-state casino company attack our  
3 local university, Hofstra. It's unfair.  
4 It's inappropriate. And none of you who  
5 stood up for that university.

6 And don't let them divide us. They  
7 want to divide us. They want to pit union  
8 construction workers against us concerned  
9 residents. That's wrong. We are all here  
10 to maintain the quality of life in Long  
11 Island and make Nassau County better for  
12 future generations. They have come here  
13 for one reason: To increase their bottom  
14 line by hundreds of millions of dollars.  
15 And they'll do that by taking out \$2  
16 billion a year in gambling losses. This  
17 is bigger than taxes and jobs, guys. You  
18 have to hold town halls with your  
19 constituents. You have to listen to the  
20 big picture. Let's move forward.

21 Thank you for listening.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
23 Terry Coniglio.

24 MS. CONIGLIO: My name is Terry  
25 Coniglio and I'm speaking on behalf of

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Hofstra University.

The proposed lease agreement between Nassau County and Las Vegas Sands for the operation of the Nassau Coliseum, the Operating Lease, must be viewed in tandem with the terms sheet for the second lease for the casino development of the Coliseum site, the Casino Lease. These two leases work together to benefit Las Vegas Sands at the expense of Nassau County residents, current and future. To review and process them separately is segmentation and goes against the New York Supreme Court decision from last November.

Las Vegas Sands has been operating the Coliseum property since November of 2023. As Hofstra stated previously, we appreciate and support the ongoing operation of the Coliseum in the same manner as has been occurring until a resolution is reached regarding the long term development of the Nassau Hub.

The jobs of those employed at the

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Coliseum are not dependent on the lease to Las Vegas Sands. All that is needed is an Operating Agreement, like the one under which Sands is currently operating the Coliseum.

The Operating Lease at issue is not for the purpose of maintaining jobs. Rather, it is a precursor to and contemplates the development of a casino at the Nassau Hub. The 42 year term of the proposed lease would foreclose the possibility of any long term development of the Coliseum by anyone other than Las Vegas Sands.

Notably, the lease gives Sands the option of shutting down after two years, which could put Coliseum employees jobs at risk.

Likewise, rent of \$10 million per year is excessive for simply running the Coliseum in its current state. Instead, this amount reflects the substantial value to Las Vegas Sands of having site control over this county property for its

1  
2 proposed casino and development. Control  
3 of the property allows them to promote  
4 its proposed casino development on County  
5 property, and apply for New York State  
6 casino license next spring.

7 Here, Nassau County and Las Vegas  
8 Sands have made clear their intentions to  
9 proceed with a massive casino and  
10 development of the Nassau Hub and have  
11 already negotiated a terms sheet and  
12 drafted the Casino Lease to carry out  
13 this plan. The Operating Lease is simply  
14 the first step. There is no other reason  
15 that Sands has an interest in running the  
16 Coliseum than to be in a position to bid  
17 for a casino license from the New York  
18 State.

19 We urge members of the Legislature  
20 to review the Operating Lease as part of  
21 SEQRA review for the full development of  
22 the Coliseum. The County should conduct a  
23 full SEQRA review of the Operating Lease  
24 and issue a positive declaration under  
25 SEQRA. To do otherwise, to treat the

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Operating Lease as an independent lease  
is improper segmentation under SEQRA.

Hofstra remains adamant that the  
location is not appropriate for a casino.  
Let's together consider what proposals  
would best bolster the long term,  
inclusive and sustainable economic growth  
of this region and ensure our children's  
future.

Thank you for your consideration.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Valerie  
Fitts.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Gina  
Farese.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Giorgio  
Citrus.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Jeanne  
Goldsmith.



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(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Dolores Rome.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Alexandra Arso.

(Whereupon, states for Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you. Richard Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Long day for you folks and I appreciate your time. I just wish this had occurred about 6 or 7 hours ago. Seems it was a little bit greater importance than what it is being given right now.

I approach the podium with a lot of doubt. Frankly, I doubt that many of you are going to listen to this appeal, but I'll make it anyway.

The voters, the facts, the

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environment and the law just don't seem to matter to most of the people on the dais. This is an action. This an action as defined by the statutes. It's part of an overall plan. It's sequestration on steroids. It makes what we did a couple of months ago look like a baby's rattle. It's nothing compared to what you're trying to do now.

On the environment, I've heard this story from what you're going to do. I have serious questions about how it's going to be done, but this is a severe, severe impact.

It is incredulous to me to hear OSPAC saying there's going to be no impact from this effort by Sands. Again, I'm incredulous, but the OSPAC hearing, there were 292 comments; 289 were against Sands, three were for. Did anybody listen? I don't think so.

Voters, this is personal. All of you get elected. All of you up for election in about 18 months, 16 months.

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This is a call to do what's right, not what's expedient. This is a call to do what's best for this County.

I personally feel that the Sands has pitted the unions against other people. No one in this room is against the unions. Everyone wants jobs. Everybody wants good jobs. Everybody wants it done well.

As Mr. Catalano said, \$2 billion pulled out of our economy. Where is it going to come from? Who is it going to come from? It's going to come from the people in this county. I've lived here for most of my life. I've lived in this county and I have five children who live in this county. I have 17 grandchildren who live in this county. It would be nice to think that it had a future. If you go ahead with Sands, you are destroying their future. You are destroying their future as certain as as if you put a stake in their heart. This is not going to be good for us. Find another answer.

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Table this. Find another answer.

Thank you for your patience.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Jeffrey  
Herskovitz.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Mariam  
Hamicalse.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Utao  
Flores.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Chris Rosa.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Peggy Volz.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Barbara  
Kane.

MS. KANE: Good evening, members of  
the Committee. My name is Barbara Kane.

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I'm a local East Meadow resident.  
Professionally, I'm a local realtor. I'm also a certified financial planner. I'm no stranger to finance.

So we're giving or considering a 42 year Operational Lease to Las Vegas Sands. We're considering a 99 year redevelopment lease to Las Vegas Sands. Business 101, clearly, this sounds like a monopoly to me.

In addition, local businesses will be crushed. Where's our sense of community? Where's our compassion? What is happening to Nassau County? Real estate values will be impacted and real estate values will be impacted negatively.

Now I understand the union leaders want jobs. I agree. We all want to work. We all need to pay our taxes. But we pay taxes to live in Long Island, to live in suburbia. And if we have this massive casino take place, Long Island will become a Queens. And Queens is different

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tax bracket than Long Island. What are we paying our taxes for?

I believe in capitalism. I believe in jobs. But I think Nassau County can do better. I think we can do better than a casino. Maybe affordable housing, maybe a hospital, maybe senior housing. I don't have all the answers, but it just seems to me building a casino of this magnitude is going to change the landscape considerably.

Have you driven on Hempstead Turnpike lately? What is that going to look like once we have this new casino in place?

The casino is going to rob us of our community. The casino is going to rob us of generational wealth in our real estate values. Generational wealth that we could leave to our children. Generational wealth that we could lead to our grandchildren. I think that's not really being addressed here.

Given the fact that I live in the

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local community of East Meadow, there's also a very large Muslim population, and I don't think they like to gamble and drink. So are we really addressing all the different communities that are living in Long Island? I urge you to reconsider. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Luis Vazquez.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Brad Thompson.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Jeremy Joseph.

MR. JOSEPH: My name is Jeremy Joseph. I'm a resident of Hicksville. We've been having this hearing over and over again. Pro Casino; anti casino. What gets lost in the mix is the nature of the casino support. Everyone speaking in favor of Las Vegas Sands are being paid

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to do so. If you're not being paid, I have bad news for you; you're a sucker. This is \$1 billion corporation built on a predatory business model and famous for gross labor violations, and now they've come to Nassau asking for a handout in the form of the Coliseum property.

Now, what could we possibly doing with this property? Over the last decade, no area in this country has created fewer new housing units than Long Island -- sorry, in the northeast region. We have a housing shortage, and when there is a shortage of housing, existing homes become more expensive.

Over 50% of New Yorkers cannot afford their monthly housing costs. People are moving away from Long Island and en mass because they can't afford to live here. This is by far the number one problem we are facing here. We have public control of one of the largest properties in central Nassau County; near universities and community colleges, no



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2 less. One that is clearly in need of  
3 development. One that is already in the  
4 middle of a suburban environment. I'm not  
5 naive enough to trust Las Vegas Sands'  
6 alternate proposals of housing  
7 development. Las Vegas Sands is not in  
8 the business of housing people, they  
9 bankrupt them.

10 Statewide, there is a growing  
11 movement to address this housing crisis.  
12 And a solution that's gaining popularity  
13 is social housing. Social housing in the  
14 form of limited equity cooperatives or  
15 permanently affordable rentals would be  
16 the perfect use of this publicly  
17 controlled property. Imagine affordable  
18 housing for the middle class for senior  
19 citizens. Imagine a rent that is no more  
20 than 25% of your income.

21 You want to talk about union labor?  
22 If granted a casino license, the Las  
23 Vegas Sands is promised only a year and a  
24 half of union labor for the construction  
25 phase. Then what? The operations

1  
2 workforce, which will be long term, has  
3 no such assurances. We can do better for  
4 our brothers and sisters in labor. This  
5 social housing legislation would ensure  
6 that these housing developments would  
7 only use union labor. That's a lot of  
8 good work for a long time. I'd much  
9 rather our friends in labor take pride in  
10 housing our community and their own  
11 families instead of building a casino  
12 that would exploit them.

13 And that's the saddest part of all  
14 this. This property represents an  
15 incredible opportunity to help Nassau  
16 County. Instead, we're seeing the lack of  
17 imagination from those on the dais. We're  
18 seeing our politicians take some of our  
19 poorest communities and setting them up  
20 to be cheap labor for \$1 billion  
21 corporation. Do not approve this lease.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Luis Bedo.

23 (Whereupon, no verbal  
24 response.)

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Patty

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Harris.

MS. HARRIS: Hi, I'm Patty Harris. Uniondale. I've been living in Uniondale for about roughly 40 years, and I'll be 60 soon. So I would like to say, this change for a casino to be here is what you would say is one of those brain fart thoughts, I think, because I cannot believe to have kids that are going to college and then you have elementary kids to high school, you've got private schools, you have the public schools around there, to even think of, to put a casino there. Just because your last meeting that you had, all you kept hearing was dollar, dollar, dollar. You know, sometimes you can't buy everything.

We have a lot of people in Uniondale who state they do not want it. You have not even sat down with us. The County Executive has not even come to our community. He don't even come to our community when it's election time. So why would we trust him enough to want a

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casino there?

I understand that he has a relative that is a part of the casino. We had a former legislator, Legislator Abrahams, who did step down from when it was time to speak. He gave the gracious way of saying that he could not speak because he had a relative himself there. But the County Executive is making sure that this location for a casino is available for all types of, I say, crime. I do not want prostitution, kids' trafficking. I do not want -- even Jake 58 they had an issue and Jake 58 is much smaller than that. So because if Jake 58 is smaller, how much crime you think will come with a bigger casino?

Now, I was at Nassau Community College, my daughter graduated and I had a pleasure of being there to watch her graduate, but I also had a pleasure to be there when they booed our County Executive for even announcing the casino.

I feel that a casino is not the

1  
2 right place. We're not a destiny (sic)  
3 location. The Hamptons, the Shinnecock  
4 Reservation is a destination of Long  
5 Island. And I speak for the late  
6 Commissioner Melvin Harris, Jr. Because  
7 that was my husband.

8 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
9 All right. Elizabeth Nabet.

10 (Whereupon, no verbal  
11 response.)

12 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Karen  
13 Rierdan.

14 MS. RIERDAN: Good evening. I'm  
15 calling upon the Legislature to table  
16 your vote on the site control and  
17 Operation Lease to Las Vegas Sands until  
18 an environmental impact statement is done  
19 and a SEQRA review is complete.

20 This isn't about how you feel about  
21 the casino or saving jobs, it's about  
22 following the law. SEQRA law requires  
23 elected officials and the public to fully  
24 understand the project's impacts before  
25 you are asked to approve the lease. And

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we know this now, because last fall, the courts ruled the lease with Las Vegas Sands was illegal due to segmentation and they annulled the lease.

What I never understood was how the County brought an illegal contract up for vote in the first place. Don't you have to follow the laws? Don't you have legal counsel to advise you on these matters? How did all of you besides Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton approve this illegal contract? I mean, many of you are attorneys and the caucus is advised by attorneys. So how did this ever happen?

But that was then and this is now. So here we are again, now. And I understand segmentation now because it's not that difficult. You are here once again being asked to vote on a contract without understanding its full impacts. Stating that this 42 year lease is not for a casino does not absolve the need for a full environmental impact statement. It's still required.

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To force you to take a vote today without understanding the full impact of tying up 72 acres for 42 years without this study is, quite frankly, a waste of taxpayer money at risk again for being found to be in violation of this required SEQRA act. It's unfair and illegal for the County to put you in a position where you may have to explain to us, your constituents, why you made an irresponsible, uninformed decision to tie up one of the County's prime properties for 42 years without having the required information. If you approve the 42 year lease today, how will you explain your vote to your constituents again, if it's determined it's an illegal contract and you knowingly approved it? How will you explain why you made this informed decision to approve this project despite the knowledge of segmentation? Or the possibility of the SEQRA review comes back a year from now, and it reveals numerous impacts which can't be

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mitigated; how do you then explain any of this when the laws require that you should have known this before taking your vote?

I'm asking you to table your vote on the lease until you can make an informed decision by legally requiring an EIS. Specifically, I call upon my representative, Legislator Mazi Pilip, to show leadership now at a time when your constituents desperately need to hear your voice. Please table your vote. Don't let the County in Las Vegas Sands pressure you to relinquish your responsibility to follow the law. We elected all of you to be courageous leaders, not complicit followers.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Dwayne Hucolsh.

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Lynn Krug.

MS. KRUG: Good evening. It's been a



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long day. When I printed my letter this morning, I said, good afternoon. Now it's past my bedtime.

Anyway, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. If you need an example of the corrosive effect that this casino project will have on our community, you need only to see the toxic rhetoric that's already been aimed at casino opponents and at Hofstra University.

In recent hearings, Hofstra actions on behalf of their students and the community by calling out county leadership for not following the law, have been called a scorched earth policy and dangerous.

In recent news articles, Hofstra's actions have been called bullying and accused opponents of using arguments with racist and classist undertones. Let's not forget the County Executive's personal attacks and baseless accusations against Hofstra's President. Even LV Sands is no

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longer content to let others take the low road joined in with digital ads to say that Hofstra University doesn't care about our community.

For 90 years, Hofstra has been an integral and contributing member of the County and the town, a longstanding institution of which we can all be proud. Tens of thousands of students, many of them were in this room earlier today, have had their lives lifted by their education and experiences there.

On the other hand, LVS Sands showed up just two years ago with a plan for the country's second largest casino, because, as their spokesperson said, they like the demographic.

Reminder to everyone the money that LV Sands will be spending in the community is a lot less, a lot less than the money they'll be taking from the community.

I'm grateful to Hofstra for ensuring accountability, for sticking to the

1  
2 facts, for protecting their student body,  
3 and for taking the high road while doing  
4 it. No name-calling, no accusations of  
5 racism. Remember, their legal actions  
6 would not have been successful if our  
7 county was doing the right thing.

8 This very building that we sit in  
9 tonight was named for the great  
10 Republican Teddy Roosevelt. His statue  
11 stands outside. We don't have to guess  
12 how Teddy would have felt about this. He  
13 already told us. He decried all types of  
14 gambling to be pernicious, a word not  
15 commonly used today. It means destructive  
16 and poisonous. I'd say that Teddy had it  
17 right. Remember when you cast your votes  
18 on this project, Teddy is going to be  
19 looking at each of you every time you  
20 enter and leave this building.

21 Thank you.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Lina  
23 Vivas.

24 (Whereupon, no verbal  
25 response.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: George  
Krug.

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Helen  
Matines.

MS. MATINES: Well, I just have to  
say that as a community leader, I've  
always met a lot of people who leave here  
in Nassau County and travel to New Jersey  
and Connecticut and other places to visit  
casinos, and they go there regularly,  
many of them. There's gambling all over  
the United States. We have to get used to  
that. Whether you like it or not. You  
don't have to do it if you don't like it.

So why not have a casino here and we  
can leave that money here on Long Island  
instead of sending our residents out to  
other places to spend it? It's entirely  
up to you to do it. It's not like we're  
holding the gun to anybody's head.

But anyway, for people who did not  
enjoy casinos, as I said, don't come. But

1  
2 there are plenty who come and spend money  
3 here from other places. And add that to  
4 our taxes being everyone's always crying  
5 about taxes, that's what it's all about;  
6 well, here's a big help. I just hope you  
7 give it a little more, thought. And for  
8 those who don't like it, you don't have  
9 to come. That's the bottom line.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.  
11 Alison O'Brien Silva.

12 MS. MATINES: One more thing about  
13 Hofstra. I have a child that went to  
14 Hofstra, and he's 45 years old. And there  
15 was plenty of gambling going on there at  
16 that time.

17 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Alison  
18 Silva.

19 (Whereupon, no verbal  
20 response.)

21 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Patricia  
22 McNeill.

23 (Whereupon, no verbal  
24 response.)

25 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Steve

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Ralston.

MR. RALSTON: Thank you. I'm Steve Ralston from Baldwin.

Gambling is the new tobacco. Gambling was never good for any community. Despite the promises of new found revenue, the sellers are the only ones making money. It all started with a lie. We were told by our governor, Andrew Cuomo, in 2013 and now by Governor Hochul and Bruce Blakeman, that legalized gambling will lower taxes, funds public education and the MTA and help the overall budget. This has not happened upstate; it will not happen here.

When we were children, one simple rule we were taught is do not accept candy, ice cream or money from strangers. They want something more. Now, LV Sands, the stranger, is offering soccer clinics, lawnmowers for little leagues, cash to legislative districts, and \$54 million an upfront rental payment for our underutilized Nassau Coliseum. They want

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2 something more, and we will regret it if  
3 they get it. A shiny new casino in this  
4 peaceful county.

5 Governors Cuomo and Hochul failed to  
6 tell us of:

7 1. The economic damage. Casinos  
8 create \$3 in social costs for every \$1  
9 they bring in. Casino revenues are always  
10 overestimated and offer low skilled jobs,  
11 which hinders economic growth.

12 2. The environmental damage: To  
13 our lungs when 23,000 extra visitors  
14 arrive each day, and that congested area.

15 To our water when they draw an  
16 additional 875,000 gallons of water each  
17 day from our already stressed aquifer.

18 To our air. This is the hottest year  
19 ever recorded. They want to run lights,  
20 machinery, air conditioning, 24/7 to heat  
21 up an already overheated Hub. Let's see  
22 the environmental impact statements  
23 first.

24 Then there is the human cost. When  
25 problem gamblers and addicted gamblers

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drag their families down.

And to our towns where our  
restaurants, hotels and clubs will have  
to compete with the shiny new  
playgrounds.

This casino won't be so attractive  
in three years when the novelty wears  
off. They say, don't look at Atlantic  
City, it won't be like that; it will.  
There is not a good ending for casinos in  
a residential area and across the street  
from two universities. Home values will  
decrease for miles around, crime will  
increase, gambling addiction will  
increase.

Gambling is the new tobacco. It all  
started with a lie. Now we know we do not  
need a casino for a healthy economy. A  
casino will wreck our environment, our  
family, health and our peaceful way of  
life in Nassau County.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Jason  
Abeloff.



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(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Pearl  
Jacobs.

MS. JACOBS: In my research I came  
across this very well written letter  
concerning casinos in Nassau County.

"January 7th, 2015. Dear Presiding  
Officer Gonsalves, as you are no doubt  
aware, the Board of Directors of the  
Nassau County Off Track Betting  
Corporation has recently announced plans  
to construct a large casino at the former  
Fortunoff site in the heart of Westbury.  
As we understand it, this casino project  
will feature as many as 1000 video  
lottery terminals, essentially high tech  
slot machines, including gaming tables  
for possibly higher stakes games of  
chance. The casino may even have the  
option of operating throughout the  
evening and into the early hours of the  
morning.

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Moreover, although located at a former retail site, the casino would be in close proximity to a number of quiet residential neighborhoods.

In my opinion, it cannot be denied that such a gambling facility and the kind of activity it will inevitably attract, seriously threatens the family oriented quality of life in Westbury and the surrounding communities. Yet, distressingly, there is no indication that the OTB Board has given the slightest consideration to the interests of our residents.

On the contrary, the Board has attempted to push through this highly controversial casino project behind closed doors with no transparency or public participation, apparently in an effort to avoid public scrutiny and community opposition.

In my view, it is clear that the prospect of generating large scale gambling revenue for itself in the county

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has binded the OTB Board to the well-being of its neighbors and to the greater good of the community.

I strongly believe that through its irresponsible actions, the OTB Board has forfeited the trust and confidence of the Legislature and should be removed. I, therefore, urge you to support a resolution immediately terminating and replacing the current OTB Board members.

Understand that this is not a partizan attempt to alter the political composition of the Board. In fact, I pledge to you that I will personally support and urge my colleagues in the Minority Caucus to likewise support any board appointees put forth by the Majority, regardless of party affiliation. But I make this proposal in two essential conditions. Any appointed proposed by the Majority must publicly comment on the record to call a halt to the proposed placement of the casino at the Westbury site; and, two, the site

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2 eventually selected, if any, must be  
3 chosen through an open, transparent  
4 process with the opportunity for  
5 significant public participation as  
6 opposed to the current process, which has  
7 effectively disenfranchized tens of  
8 thousands of county residents who will  
9 bear the brunt of the impact of the  
10 casino.

11 Finally, given all that is at stake  
12 here, I believe that a resolution  
13 replacing the Board should be placed on  
14 the Full Legislative Calendar for January  
15 26th, 2015 and acted upon by emergency if  
16 need be.

17 Sincerely, Siela A. Bynoe,  
18 Legislative District 2."

19 Legislator Bynoe, what change your  
20 perspective regarding casinos being  
21 placed in your legislative district?  
22 Crickets. Thank you.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Caprice  
24 Rines.

25 (Whereupon, states for

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Sands, declines to speak.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

Eric Rucker.

Is there anyone who wants to speak on this on the casino who did not have a slip into this?

(Whereupon, clarification of speakers.)

MS. REIMERS: Good evening. I don't know. Every time I come here, I'm lost. My issue is you guys have a minority side and the majority. The majority side is acting like you are dictators.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: I'm sorry to interrupt you, we won't take away your time. Please state your name for the reporter.

MS. REIMERS: My name is Colleen Reimers. And I live in Uniondale for 31 years. And when I moved here, that is never my intention to retire somewhere else. Apparently, you guys are going to force me to do it because I'm living five blocks from the Nassau Coliseum.

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Back to you guys, the way you operate. I come from Haiti. I know what dictatorship is about. When you guys are operating here, this is exactly like the way Duvalier used to do it. Because you guys don't give them no chance to negotiate anything. This is America. That's why I came. That's why I left my country to come here. But right here, the way you guys act, it's like you're acting like, oh, so what? Oh, no. We're going to go with it. They're asking you guys today, let's go over it. No. But what is this? What is this? That's not the way it's supposed to be. And that's what makes the country going down. And you guys have a country that is the envy of everybody around the world. And if you guys keep playing game, you're going to be like everybody else, because your system is a system -- everybody loves that system. But lately the way you guys are operating, you're bringing the system down. If you can take my word for it,

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change it. You guys are not treating them fairly. Because all they're asking for is meeting. All the asking for is reconsider something. No, it's not going to happen.

And by the way, when it come to the casino, even Sands come and put a proposal here. Fine, it's a business. I've been working on Wall Street for so long, that's fine. The business, that's what they want. They want their own interest. Fine. But when they come and ask you guys to put a casino at the Coliseum when we have a cancer hospital right there, you guys don't know what it is for somebody to have cancer? So they're going to lay taking their chemotherapy treatment and then the casino will be playing. You guys don't have no empathy for nobody. Come on guys. You guys can do better. Do better than that okay. Do better than that.

And none of you live in Uniondale. That's the other thing. None of you live in Uniondale. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ma'am, in the front row. Please state your name.

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MS. KIELY: I don't know if you can read my sign from up there. Monica Kiely, "Say no to the casino". Forty two years operating and site control. No one said site control tonight. That's really funny. All over the lease, it says operating and site control; 42 years. Two years of operating, 42 years of site control. This lease is not about jobs. This lease is about site control.

What are we doing? Signing over 42 -- 72 acres of land in the middle of Nassau County for 42 years to a gambling operator, a private corporation, an outsider. Right. Someone offers you candy. Don't take it. Don't get in the car. What are we doing?

Legislators, the 42 year site control lease in front of you is illegal. Table the vote. Or better yet, vote no. As the first step towards constructing a mega casino in Nassau County, this lease



1  
2 is an attempt at segmentation. As this  
3 Body was found in violation last year due  
4 to segmentation of SEQRA law by a New  
5 York Supreme Court judge, we are  
6 mystified as to why you are attempting  
7 this again.

8 And, John Ferretti, you're annoyed  
9 that now you're doing the right thing and  
10 you want to be acknowledged for it  
11 because Hofstra sued you last year. You  
12 have to be sued to do the right thing,  
13 and then you want Hofstra to acknowledge  
14 it? I don't get that attitude.

15 In addition, this lease gives -- I  
16 said this already -- SEQRA law covers  
17 social and economic impacts of a project  
18 as well as environmental impacts. Maybe  
19 you guys don't know that since you don't  
20 seem very well versed in the law, even  
21 though a lot of you are lawyers. The 42  
22 year lease deserves its own SEQRA review.  
23 What you think it's going to have no  
24 impact to tie up a piece of property like  
25 that for 72 years -- 42 years? I'm punch

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drunk because I've been here all day.

John Giuffre, you are my legislator. I implore you to listen to your constituents, not give us any B.S. excuses for voting yes. We see you. We understand what's going on here.

Table this vote or vote no. Republican legislators, please be aware that if you continue to ignore Republican voters, and in particular Republican women voters who are just waiting to flip Democrat, we will ignore you at the polls.

You tell us you're tough on crime while you usher in a casino? That is the height of hypocrisy and you know it.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Ms. Mereday.

MS. MEREDAY: Everybody knows who I am. You can infer what my intent is going to be with my mask on. So if somebody wants that thousand dollar fine, come look for it.

Say no to the casino. It's a given.

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The Majority over here. You're already going to vote for it. It doesn't come from any decision making here. It's coming from Westbury. Like, where's the national headquarters? Post Road, right? Okay. So that's it.

That's all the time I'm going to waste on that. Because this here is a fundamental issue as it pertains to the Nassau County Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Not one person has mentioned that, at least not in the time that I was here the first four hours. And then I had to come back because this was an issue I wanted to make sure that I was on the record. And for those, my brothers and sisters from Hofstra, second generation Hofstra alum, in this scenario that we're living in in 2024 that want to make a statement about somebody being a DEI higher as if it's some potential slur, let me tell you this when we talk about statistics -- and yes, I'm a proud African American woman who's worked hard to get to where I am --

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Less than 2% of hires in corporate America are those who look like me. So the attacks on this DEI scenario, if you think it's going to impact me, the majority of you better look at the wives, daughters, nieces, all of that. White women, 20%? So if you want to throw that dagger, guess what? It went past me.

Now let's talk about this casino. The veterans who were given some token representation at the initial presentation about the casino, I think they were going to get, what, a memorial wall or something? They were going to get a statue or something. I'm a part of three national organizations that's focusing on two major issues that are impacting our veterans: Suicide and debt. So please, can somebody explain to me how this casino is going to help them when the majority of these veterans won't even be able to go to that facility for a variety of reasons, not just the bells and whistles that are going to impact

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their PTSD.

But it's okay, though, because again, my issue in my remaining seconds, I might have to go over. And if somebody wants to make a comment from the back, come on, come on. We have to take more responsibility. Healthcare is the number one industry on Long Island; we can focus on that. Business development, research and development; we need to focus on that. We do not need to focus on a casino, and I'm going to take my seat in a second. I'm going to take my seat in a second. We need to reach out to the governor, because the way the governor has been treated, I wouldn't want to give this county any type of lease, and I would surely give it to somebody else, because the average salary in New York State for casino workers is \$28,000, and you can't live in a closet in Nassau County. Say no to the casino.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Is there anyone else who hasn't been called? Yes,

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sir. Your name please.

MR. LLOYD: Good evening, Dan Lloyd.

And I'm representing an organization called Minority Millennials. And our mission is to help young people of color access jobs, build wealth, and become civically engaged. And we are in strong support of Las Vegas Sands and the vote to extend this lease as well as the SEQRA review for many reasons. But most importantly to start off with is the promise of keeping existing 400 plus union jobs. That is very important to our region and as well as the extension and the promise and the opportunity for thousands of more union jobs, many of which our young people here across the region and Long Island are hungry and eager to get involved with.

And many, as you know, there's a cap to those positions. We need these type of billion dollar regional economic impact opportunities to increase the doors to union career construction and trades, as

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well as the opportunity to build  
generational wealth.

And I want to make it very clear  
what we mean on generational wealth.  
These jobs that exist with Las Vegas  
Sands are not just entry level. These are  
livable wage jobs across Long Island. And  
we all know how expensive it is to live  
here and the inflation cost that comes to  
our dollar.

Generational wealth is the  
opportunity to utilize your thought, your  
vision, your idea to create a business  
and get a contract or a bid through a  
procurement academy. Las Vegas Sands, an  
international, global billion dollar  
company, has come to our region, our home  
and educated us on how to go about that  
process. Millions of families and  
businesses across Long Island have made  
millions through the procurement process,  
and for young people in the next  
generation, we have that unique moment to  
grasp upon that wealth and that

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opportunity to get our business idea into the resort.

Lastly, it's very important to understand the vibrancy that we need across this region. I heard a young lady earlier mentioned that this is not a tourist destination. However, we did have the existing Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum here built in the 1970s just for that tourism purpose, and it has not met that goal; it has not met that vision. This is the opportunity to bring back that vision, to create jobs, generational wealth, and make sure that we have the quality of life that we've all wanted.

I'm a Long Island kid. I grew up here, and I hope to keep my family with my kids here to say that they can go to the resort and enjoy the amenities that they need.

And it's very important when we talk about economic income and development and who provides the taxes for that. I'm very passionate about our majority/minority



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communities, especially those that surround this area, and who provides the resources to extend into the schools and into the local communities who are paying the taxes. And I want to make it very clear, I think, or question the Legislative Body, are we well aware that Hofstra University does not pay a dime into the local tax system? They have not, and they continue to not provide any taxes into the local regional area.

With that said, it is very important for us to support this project, the lease transfer and the SEQRA review.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Thank you.

Your name, please.

MS. SILBERMAN: Good evening. My name is Ariel. I've been before you before? I'm an alumni of Nassau Community College.

We are all the products of our environments. The people who shaped us, the trials that bruised us, the triumphs

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that are born from those tests of our resolve. But not all of us start on the same starting line. Poverty, medical issues, broken homes.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Excuse me, are you here to talk about this item?

MS. SILBERMAN: The casino, yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Because your slip said something else. But go on, please.

MS. SILBERMAN: Yes. I wasn't exactly sure when I would speak.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Go ahead, please.

MS. SILBERMAN: My community college has been a boon to me personally, but I know the impact it gives to the community and how many people it has educated. I'm afraid that the current casino, if it goes ahead, will threaten that very college. It is an outside attack, not like the inside attacks I've told you about with department mergers, but it is, nonetheless, important to talk about. The

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Sands Casino is beating down our front door and unlike Hofstra, our administration is welcoming them with enthusiasm. The push towards workforce development is code for training our people to be the bodies manning the machine. Our college attorney is quoted as saying, if the license went to the Sands Casino, I think it could be helpful getting US grants to train workers, as Nassau Community College would be a training Hub. The stigma against community college is ever present and potent as ever, but I will never for a second believe that our educational path leads to this ill thought of casino.

Our college produced Billy Crystal. We produce scientists, authors, doctors, lawyers. We educated a legislator who once had amongst you. There is nothing we cannot do. No high we cannot reach. And I think with dismay that the people who lead our college do not see the writing on the wall as Hofstra does.

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The pin I am wearing today is my commitment to my college, even though I'm an alumni now. As long as there is a college standing, I will be here to defend it. Please do not threaten my college's existence with this ill thought of casino.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay, I'm going to call a vote on these items. Ordinance 28, as amended, and Ordinance 29, as amended. All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, off the record discussion.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Let's just do first, Ordinance 28, as amended. All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

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(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
abstentions?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay.  
Unanimously in favor.

Ordinance 29, as amended.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Aye.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULLANEY: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KOSLOW: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MULE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR DAVIS: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Aye.

LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Aye.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Aye.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Aye.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Aye.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Aye.

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LEGISLATOR WALKER: Aye.

LEGISLATOR GOETZ: Aye.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Opposed?

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Nay.

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: One  
opposed. Any abstentions?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: So we have  
18-1-0.

(Whereupon, the above matter  
concludes.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We have a few more items before the Full Legislature, but before we do that, we need to have a brief Rules Committee.

I am putting Legislature into recess.

(Whereupon, brief recess for Rules Committee.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We're reconvening the Full Legislature, and we have the one item here. Which is Resolution 126 authorizing to County attorney to compromise the claims of the Harry Fang Guggenheim Foundation pertaining to the Falaise Estate.

We have a motion by Legislator Ferretti and seconded by Legislator Walker.

All those in favor of this motion, please say, "Aye".

(Whereupon, all members of the Full Legislature respond in favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Okay. That item is unanimous.

Legislator Giangregorio reluctantly adjourns --



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(Whereupon, off the record discussion.)

We have public comment.

MR. STARK: Good afternoon. Good evening. Good night. He knows what time it is. Good morning.

My name is Scott Stark. I'm the vice president of the Adjunct Faculty Association at Nassau Community College. This is my first legislative meeting. I believe it'll be my last. I used to think maybe I wanted to run for office. I do not. All right.

On behalf of the adjunct faculty association, I'd like to extend our gratitude for your approval of the labor contract between the AFA and Nassau Community College. We recognize that the negotiations were not always smooth, but we do commend all parties for their dedication to reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. The collaborative effort demonstrated during this process highlights our shared commitment to the

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future of Nassau Community College.

Throughout these negotiations, the AFA worked diligently to resolve differences, and we did so behind the scenes, because we're aware that adverse publicity could exacerbate the College's fiscal challenges. Our main priority is always the rights of our members, but another priority of ours has been to support Nassau Community College's stability and growth.

It's important to note that adjunct faculty members play a crucial role in the college's financial health. The revenue generated by adjunct instruction significantly exceeds the associated costs, making our contributions not only educationally valuable but also also fiscally advantageous. Increasing the number of adjuncts would go a long way in alleviating the College's budget shortfalls.

We appreciate your recognition of the essential role the adjunct faculty

1  
2 members play in the success of Nassau  
3 Community College and the broader  
4 community. Your support ensures that we  
5 can provide continue to provide high  
6 quality education to our students, while  
7 helping to address the college's  
8 financial challenges.

9 Thank you once again for your  
10 approval and your continued support.  
11 Thank you.

12 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All right.

13 I see that we had. Thank you. We had  
14 two more slips. I don't know if they're  
15 still here. Kerry Gillick Goldberg and  
16 Ellen Swirsky.

17 (Whereupon, no verbal  
18 response.)

19 PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Legislator  
20 Giangregorio has since overcome his  
21 reluctance and now enthusiastically moves  
22 that we adjourn. And we have a second,  
23 Legislator Giuffre seconds.  
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PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: All those  
in favor of adjourning?

(Whereupon, all members of  
the Full Legislature respond in  
favor with, "Aye".)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: Any  
opposed?

(Whereupon, no verbal  
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER KOPEL: We are  
adjourned.

(Whereupon, the Full Legislature  
meeting is adjourned, 9:48 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK )

: SS.:

County of Nassau )

I, KAREN LORENZO, a Notary Public  
for and within the State of New York, do  
hereby certify:

That the above is a correct  
transcription of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
set my hand this 5th day of August, 2024.

Karen Lorenzo

Karen Lorenzo

<b>\$</b>	336:5, 336:11, 384:4, 386:20, 399:7, 399:8 <b>1%</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 156:12 <b>1.8</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 341:17 <b>10</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 88:13, 263:13 <b>100</b> <sup>[8]</sup> - 44:6, 88:15, 138:15, 142:25, 162:8, 193:24, 196:3, 343:10 <b>100%</b> <sup>[4]</sup> - 59:15, 127:20, 143:15, 181:18 <b>100,000</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 289:16 <b>1000</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 244:23, 401:18 <b>101</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 88:15, 370:12, 381:10 <b>102</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:16 <b>103</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:16 <b>104</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:17 <b>105</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:18 <b>106</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 90:3, 90:18 <b>10601</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 332:14 <b>107</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:18 <b>108</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:19 <b>109</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:20 <b>10th</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 3:15, 336:24 <b>11</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:14 <b>110</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:20 <b>111</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:21 <b>112</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:22 <b>113</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:22 <b>114</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:23 <b>115</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 71:9, 88:24	<b>116</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:24 <b>117</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:25 <b>118</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:2 <b>119</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 94:3 <b>11th</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 3:19 <b>12</b> <sup>[4]</sup> - 88:14, 252:23, 275:5, 321:14 <b>12%</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 178:10 <b>12-0-7</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 323:6, 325:15, 326:20 <b>120</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:2 <b>121</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:3 <b>122</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:4 <b>1226</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 311:12 <b>123</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:4 <b>124</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 89:5 <b>125</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 92:3, 92:18 <b>126</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 424:5 <b>12:00</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 118:8 <b>12th</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 3:22 <b>13</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:15 <b>1300</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 254:16 <b>13th</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 2:8, 42:25 <b>14</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 88:15 <b>14th</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 3:25 <b>15</b> <sup>[4]</sup> - 88:16, 122:20, 131:25, 180:18 <b>15%</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 138:19, 190:18, 263:7 <b>1500</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 343:2 <b>1550</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 1:15 <b>15th</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 2:12, 100:21 <b>16</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 88:17, 218:12, 378:25 <b>16%</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 180:18	<b>16th</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 4:4 <b>17</b> <sup>[6]</sup> - 88:17, 218:12, 230:22, 244:19, 367:10, 379:18 <b>172</b> <sup>[4]</sup> - 332:3, 333:2, 338:9, 339:8 <b>172-24</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 344:17 <b>173</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 332:3, 333:19, 334:8 <b>173-24</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 345:25 <b>175</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 41:18, 43:25, 103:11 <b>17th</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 4:7 <b>18</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 218:12, 378:25 <b>18-1-0</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 422:12 <b>1845</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 43:25, 301:24 <b>1890</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 302:3 <b>18th</b> <sup>[3]</sup> - 4:10, 336:18, 337:10 <b>19</b> <sup>[8]</sup> - 47:21, 88:18, 105:7, 226:9, 226:11, 243:16, 266:5, 269:12 <b>1935</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 371:2 <b>1950s</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 106:18 <b>1964</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 46:7 <b>1966</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 46:7 <b>1970s</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 416:10 <b>1982</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 371:8 <b>1996</b> <sup>[2]</sup> - 52:19, 54:20 <b>1997</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 265:23 <b>1999</b> <sup>[1]</sup> - 52:19
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