

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

54th Legislative Day

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Speaker Manley: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led in prayer today by Wayne Padget, the Assistant Doorkeeper. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cell phones, and rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Padget."

Assistant Doorkeeper Padget: "Let us pray. Dear heavenly Father, you are the pillar of strength and shield. You are our shepherd who internally guides us. Father, as we start Session today, be with us and guide our thoughts and actions. With your help, good things and new beginnings will happen to this great state. Father, we have faced many challenges in our state, some with impossible odds and others that were simply unbelievable. But still, throughout both of them, you come through for us. Lord, finally, we stand before you today because we have hope for a better future. We pray that our investments, plans, and relationships will come to fruition. Walking in your light has taught us, by your power, we will persevere and win. Thank you for this Session, and you deserve nothing less than eternal glory. These things we pray, Amen."

Speaker Manley: "We will be led in the Pledge of the Allegiance today by Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Manley: "Roll Call for Attendance. Leader Lisa Hernandez is recognized to report any excused absences on the Democratic side of the aisle."

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Hernandez, L.: "Speaker, let the record show that Representatives Delgado, Will Davis, Jones, Ladisch Douglass, and Slaughter are excused today."

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

Keicher: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let the record reflect that Representatives Elik... Elik, Ozinga, and Spain are excused for today."

Speaker Manley: "Have all recorded themselves who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. There being 107 Members answering the roll call, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative Gabel, Chairperson from the Committee on Rules reports the following committee action taken on May 26, 2023: recommends be adopted is the Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 579."

Speaker Manley: "The Clerk is in receipt of a Motion in Writing to waive the posting requirements for a Bill. Leader Rita on the Motion."

Rita: "Madam Speaker, I move that the posting requirements to be waived so that Senate Bill 250 can be heard in the Executive Committee today."

Speaker Manley: "Leader Rita... Leader Rita has moved for the... to waive the posting requirements. All those in favor say 'aye'; opposed say 'nay'. Oh, excuse me. All those in favor vote 'aye'; those opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Ammons, Gabel, Gong-Gershowitz. Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this Motion, there are 70 voting in 'favor',

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37 voting 'opposed', 0 voting 'present'. And the posting requirements are waived. The Chair recognizes Leader Hernandez. Lisa Hernandez."

Hernandez, L.: "Madam Speaker, Representative Evans is excuse... is excused for the day."

Speaker Manley: "Thank you. Mr. Clerk, committee announcements."

Clerk Hollman: "The following committees will be meeting this evening: At 5:30 is the Executive Committee in Room 118. And at 6:00 is Labor & Commerce in Room 114."

Speaker Manley: "Leader Keicher."

Keicher: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Following committees, Republicans would request a caucus in Room 118."

Speaker Manley: "And the Democrats will not be caucusing. They will come back to the floor after committees... after the Republican Caucus. How long will you... think you'll be?"

Keicher: "I hear it's a very lengthy budget. So, not sure, but we will do our best to be expedient."

Speaker Manley: "I know that you will. Thank you. Committees will meet..."

Keicher: "Perhaps... perhaps an hour and a half."

Speaker Manley: "Thank you. Thank you. Committees will meet as posted, and the Democrats will return to the floor after the Republican's caucus has ended. The House will stand in recess to the call of the Chair."

Speaker Hoffman: "Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative Rita, Chairperson from the Committee on the Executive reports the following committee action taken on May 26, 2023: do pass Short Debate is Senate Bill 250; recommends be adopted is the

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Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 2204, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 to House Bill 2296, Motion to Concur with Amendment(s) 1 and 2 to Senate... to House Bill 2395, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 2949, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1, 3, and 4 to House Bill 3445, Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 2 to House Bill 3551, and Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 and 3 to House Bill 3817. Representative Evans, Chairperson from the Committee on Labor & Commerce reports the following committee action taken on May 26, 2023: recommends be adopted is the Motion to Concur with Senate Amendment(s) 1 to House Bill 2300."

Speaker Hoffman: "Going to page 6 of the Calendar. On the Order of Concurrences appears House Bill 579, Leader Gabel. Please proceed, Leader Gabel."

Gabel: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to concur with Senate Amendment 1 to the Bill. What the Senate... this is the state marketplace Bill, and the Senate just made two small changes. One is to... to change the cap on the assessment for health plans from four percent to three point five percent. And they have all of the... the appointments to the... what is it... the advisory board to have to have the consent of the Senate. Two small changes."

Speaker Hoffman: "On that question, Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates she'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Leader. The underlying Bill deals with a health benefits exchange. Is that... that correct?"

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Gabel: "Correct."

Windhorst: "And you explained what those Amendments are. There's a portion of this now which deals with a... the Senate being involved with appointments. What does that Amendment do?"

Gabel: "Well, the appointments can... are still made, but they have to be... they have to have the consent of the Senate."

Windhorst: "And that's a change from the underlying Bill?"

Gabel: "Correct."

Windhorst: "And what does the Bill do with relation to the change in the exchange? Just to remind our side how that changes."

Gabel: "Currently, it... we're on the federal exchange. And we would have our own state health market place exchange, which would allow us to be more flexible."

Windhorst: "And to the Motion. Just to alert Members on our side, the underlying Bill changed, so your vote may not reflect your current feelings on the Bill. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Keicher."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Keicher: "Okay. Thank you, Leader. I've got a couple questions for you, just regarding some of the changes. I understand the assessment cap has been altered in this Senate Amendment."

Gabel: "Correct."

Keicher: "Can you share with me what that change looks like?"

Gabel: "Yes. I stated that it... it is going from four percent to three point five percent."

Keicher: "Okay. And can you also talk a little bit about the opportunity to standardize the health plans? Now, it's permissive through the rules and the... as I understand it,

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there's been some changes regarding their ability to standardize."

Gabel: "No. I don't see any changes in that."

Keicher: "Through the rules process, were there... will the department have the ability to standardize the plans?"

Gabel: "Will... I'm sorry, repeat that."

Keicher: "No, that's okay. Through the rules process, will the department have the opportunity to standardize the health plans?"

Gabel: "That's something they could do, but it's not included in the Bill."

Keicher: "It's not included in the Bill. Okay. Thank you very much."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Flowers."

Flowers: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Lady yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates she'll yield."

Flowers: "Representative Gabel, how much will the clients have to pay?"

Gabel: "That will be set. It's not set at this time."

Flowers: "How much are they paying now on the federal level?"

Gabel: "I do not know exactly what they are paid right now... what they pay right now."

Flowers: "Will the state be cheaper than what the federal level is?"

Gabel: "We are expecting that. Yes."

Flowers: "How are..."

Gabel: "We are expecting the state to be less money."

Flowers: "What guarantees are we going to have in regards to the copays and the deductibles? Because the copays and the

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deductibles on the federal marketplace is very high. And for the most part, people cannot afford to use the plan because they can't afford to pay the copays and the deductibles."

Gabel: "Yeah. So, this Bill... with this Bill, there are no changes to that. The state... for it to have the state exchange. But my next Bill will... will help that tremendously. So, the next Bill that I have, which we'll talk about sometime this evening, is a... is for... the state will... the Department of Insurance will be able to approve or disapprove of the premium rates that an insurance company would put forward for individuals."

Flowers: "So, what's going to happen with MCOs and those types of plans? Will they be condensed, or how many plans are we going to have? And how is the competition going to work for the affordability of... because most of these people, all of them quite frankly, are going to be low-income people. And so, on... on the marketplace for the state. For the most part, these will be people that's uninsured on their jobs. And..."

Gabel: "It also is for entrepreneurs and people who are not... do not have insurance through their employer."

Flowers: "Most of them, also, would be low-income people for the vast majority. So, I'm asking you now about will... are we going to eliminate some of these other plans that's out here already? And what are we going to do about the federal marketplace with the plans that's out there? Are... is there going to be competition between the state and the feds?"

Gabel: "No. In this Bill, we are... it is to change the federal marketplace to a state-based marketplace and..."

Flowers: "So, we will not be using the federal marketplace..."

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Gabel: "Correct."

Flowers: "...anymore?"

Gabel: "Correct."

Flowers: "Will people have a choice?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "Will they be able to choose?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "So, the federal marketplace still will be here."

Gabel: "They will be able to choose their insurance through the state-based exchange."

Flowers: "But if they want to stay on the federal..."

Gabel: "They will not be able to. There will no longer be a federal exchange here in Illinois. It will be a state-based exchange."

Flowers: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Gabel to close."

Gabel: "Appreciate an 'aye' vote on these small changes that the Senate made to this Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 579?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 71 voting 'yes', 37 voting 'no', 1 voting 'present'. And this... and the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 579. And this Bill, having received the Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Mr. Clerk, please read Supplemental Calendar #1 a second time. Senate Bill 250. Mr. Clerk."



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Clerk Hollman: "Senate Bill 250, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. Second Reading of this Senate Bill. No Committee Amendments. No Floor Amendments. No Motions are filed."

Speaker Hoffman: "Third Reading. Representative Grant, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Grant: "Thank you, Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Grant: "I want to speak about this now because I just won't have the energy to do it... do this with a clear head after midnight. This Invest in Kids Scholarship Program is something that I really spent a lot of time talking about and working on these past few years. It is one of the rare pieces of legislation that came out of this Body back in 2017 that portions of both parties could support. Unfortunately, this had a sunset. And I have a feeling I know why the sunset was used. We all know why, but I don't want to talk about that now. However, as we saw in the budget given to us last night, this program was not included. What was included was five point five percent pay raise for Legislators, on top of an extra two point five percent in cost-of-living adjustment. Oh, and free health care for undocumented immigrants. So, if I have this right, this Body cares more about giving themselves pay raises, providing health care benefits to people who are not even citizens than we care about helping Illinois children from disadvantaged backgrounds get a safe and quality education. I hope and pray that children and families who are about to have this program ripped away from them will one day forgive us. The advocates are not going away. They're not backing

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down. They're going to work hard to secure this program. I still have optimism because we have time to... we have time to fix this wrong. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "We're remaining on page 6 of the Calendar, appears House Bill 2296, Leader Gabel. Leader Gabel, please proceed."

Gabel: "Thank you. I move to concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2. So, the Senate... actually, this is a different Bill than the original. This Bill is called the Illinois Health Care Consumer and Small Business Affordability and Transparency Act. This is one... this was one of the biggest pieces of consumer protection legislation that the General Assembly has passed in recent memory. When the Governor signs this Bill, Illinois will join 41 other states in protecting Illinois consumers and small businesses from unfair premium rate hikes. And for the first time, insurance companies will have to provide specific information about how they set their rates so consumers and small businesses will know why they pay what they pay for insurance. This will help individuals who do not receive health insurance through their employer and small businesses. There are three points to this Bill. It provides the Department of Insurance the authority to approve, modify, or disapprove health premium rates that it determines to be unreasonable or inadequate in the individual and small group market. It increases transparency for consumers and small business by adding reporting requirements for insurance companies. And three, it gives the Department of Insurance the data it needs to explain to consumers and small businesses, in layman's terms, why people pay what they pay

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in a yearly report. This Bill has been sponsored by my Senator for many years, and we are thrilled that we are finally able to bring it to the Legislature. So, thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Keicher."

Keicher: "Mr. Speaker, will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates she'll yield."

Keicher: "Leader, while I appreciate your enthusiasm for this measure, I think this is one of the scariest things that we've encountered as a state in the consumer realm. Illinois has a very long and proud history in its insurance marketplace at making sure that competition is the arbiter of a fair price and to make sure that competition continues to drive down price. Such that as what has been reflected on a national scale, is that Illinois consistently, given our peer groups states reflects lower premiums than our peer groups given the same costs. Illinois' self-regulating insurance marketplace is the envy of most other places in the State of Illinois. So, I have a few questions regarding this. So, if the department is going to engage in rate regulation, it will be limited only to health insurance, correct?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Keicher: "And are there any limitations on the type of health insurance products or scope of products that will be able to be rate regulated?"

Gabel: "Well, it will be products for individuals and small businesses."

Keicher: "Okay. And so, as a part of this, the department will have to engage in reviewing the criteria that are there and making determinations on the premium. Can you share with me

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right now how many actuaries the department employs that would be able to review these rates?"

Gabel: "I... I do not know that."

Keicher: "I understand that's two. I understand the department, right now, has two actuaries who are able to review rates. So, we are putting ourselves, again, in a position with this department, which I've shared with you on prior occasions, do not have the personnel on board to be able to regulate these."

Gabel: "Well, let me explain. They already do these reviews. They review every time an insurance company wants to change their rate. And the only thing this Bill is giving them is the right to approve, disapprove, or suggest changes to it. So, they already do this work. They already review all the plans."

Keicher: "They have a file and use system. So, they're actually not going through actuarially and determining whether the rate is appropriate. What we're doing now is we are putting them in a position to determine what the rate should be, given the criteria. But let's move on. Let's talk about those criteria. So, is it the plan of the department to have an objective or subjective review of these rates and determining... in determining whether they're appropriate to be charged?"

Gabel: "Well, the department will be able to review these and decide if they're adequate, inadequate, or unreasonable."

Keicher: "Okay. So, inadequate or adequate. And what types of characteristics or costs that impact health insurance will they be reviewing to make that determination?"

Gabel: "They will use the criteria that the ACA provides."

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Keicher: "Okay. So, they're going to be looking at hospitalization costs, pharma costs, doctor visit costs, radiological costs, blood lab costs in making that evaluation, correct?"

Gabel: "The list I have is medical costs trends by major service category, enrollment trends, demographic shifts, inflation and other factors, trends and out of pocket costs for consumers."

Keicher: "And so, a natural consequence of that, some of the health insurance companies that do business in the State of Illinois are private entities. Will the department have the ability to regulate profitability of profit-based companies that are either stock or privately held?"

Gabel: "The department feels that they will be capable of doing this."

Keicher: "Okay. What is the... what is the department's feeling on what an appropriate amount of profit is that a health insurance company should be allowed to make?"

Gabel: "They just have to make sure that the companies are solvent."

Keicher: "Okay. And I believe an example was shared in committee where there was insufficient premium taken in in a health insurance. And so, I want your commitment that the department would also be in a position to raise rates given those circumstances."

Gabel: "Absolutely. They want to make sure that the rate is adequate. So, they want to make sure it's not inadequate. Because, as you know, my... we had an experience where a company did go belly up, and what happened was people were left without insurance in the middle of health crises."

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Keicher: "And can we talk about the date and timeline of implementation for this?"

Gabel: "It's plan year '25."

Keicher: "So, plan year '25, effective for January 1, 2026 rates?"

Gabel: "I think so."

Keicher: "Can we confirm that just to..."

Gabel: "Yes."

Keicher: "...get it on the record? Okay. I think that's all I have. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Keicher: "Folks, the State of Illinois is undertaking a sea change in how we treat insurance in this state. I know many people have frustrations about insurance. Nobody likes paying the premium. But there are plenty of your supporters in the trial bar who like the services that we provide to our clients in protecting them against the unexpected. When we introduce government regulation, we see what happens in states like California, and New York, and Florida, and New Jersey, and a whole host of other states. We need to be careful about government intervention in the ability to predict losses. We especially need to be cautious when we have a department that is chronically understaffed, unable to meet deadlines, and the criteria that it takes for an insurance company to maintain its operations. I know that we won't prevail on this question, but I'd encourage all of you to consider voting this down and not allow the precedent of setting rates in the State of Illinois. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Flowers."

Flowers: "Representative, what are the criterias for..."

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Speaker Hoffman: "Sponsor yields."

Flowers: "Pardon me?"

Speaker Hoffman: "The Sponsor yields."

Flowers: "Yeah. What is the criterias for a person being qualified to apply for the insurance on the marketplace?"

Gabel: "Anyone can apply."

Flowers: "Okay. So, a person on Medicaid can apply as well?"

Gabel: "I'm sorry. What's your question?"

Flowers: "A person on Medicaid, can they apply as well?"

Gabel: "No."

Flowers: "So, a person on Medicaid cannot apply for the state-base marketplace?"

Gabel: "Oh, we're now talking about rate review. This is a Bill about the..."

Flowers: "But isn't the rate review about the state-based marketplace?"

Gabel: "No. A rate review is about the Department of Insurance being able to approve or disapprove of the... the premium rate that the insurance companies propose."

Flowers: "The insurance companies that would be on the marketplace?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "Okay. So, that's what I'm talking about. Will people on Medicaid be able to apply for the insurance on the state-base marketplace?"

Gabel: "No. If someone is... qualifies for Medicaid, they would be on Medicaid. And if somebody had an income above Medicaid rate, then they would get their insurance on the state-based exchange."

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Flowers: "So, if a person that was a low-income person, who qualified and was able to be on the state-based marketplace, but then their income drops, then they will be able to apply for Medicaid?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "Will there... will there be a big difference? Will there have to be that waiting time before they leave the marketplace before they go to apply for Medicaid?"

Gabel: "I... I believe that there will be... if there is a reason for them to lose their insurance, then they will be able to get other insurance. Yes."

Flowers: "If they can't afford it. If they can't afford it because they lost their income..."

Gabel: "Yes. Yes."

Flowers: "...and now they're on Medicaid."

Gabel: "And they will be able to... yes."

Flowers: "And so, I'm asking you is... because currently there will be... there is a wait time."

Gabel: "Doesn't matter. No. They will... they will be able to apply for Medicaid immediately."

Flowers: "They will... they will be?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "Okay. And so, my final question, as far as the... because we know they qualified for the marketplace, and this is a different application that they are going to have to fill out. So, because they were working, is there a gap time between the time that they can apply from... to the Medicaid after... because they were working a regular job and had regular



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insurance? Will the income have to go down for a while, a couple months?"

Gabel: "No."

Flowers: "Okay."

Gabel: "If they're eligible for Medicaid, they will be able to get on Medicaid immediately."

Flowers: "Immediately?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "And so, one other question. In regards to the application for Medicaid, is the application process going to be made easier? Are you going to eliminate some of the paper work?"

Gabel: "Yes."

Flowers: "Will a person be able to transfer their information that you have in the marketplace back to Medicaid? And if on Medicaid, will they be able... if they found a job, will they be able to transfer easily back to the marketplace?"

Gabel: "So, the benefit of having a state-based exchange, which was my last Bill, is that... that they will be able to coordinate very closely with Medicaid so that people will be able to flow from Medicaid to regular insurance and back to Medicaid. That's the benefit of it."

Flowers: "Well, thank you very much, Representative, for answering the questions. Because in other states, there have been problems. And I know the problems that we've had in this state. And I just wanted to make sure that those problems are not going to arise and cause people on CHIP or either Medicaid to go without for whatever reason."

Gabel: "I agree."

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Flowers: "Or a person that was working that had an income now will have to be without the income for two or three months before they qualified for Medicaid and they have a preexisting condition. Thank you."

Gabel: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Scherer."

Scherer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Scherer: "I just had, quickly, one sentence to say about this. I feel I've been fighting for fair and affordable health care and insurance for our constituents here in Illinois ever since the day I walked in the door. Insurance coverage for our people needs to be fair and it needs to be affordable. And I urge an 'aye' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Gabel to close."

Gabel: "Well, thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader... Leader."

Gabel: "Thank you... thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, as we said, 41 other states have rate review. There is no reason why Illinois can't join them. We will be able to make sure that our insurance premiums are affordable, that they are reasonable, and this will truly, truly help the people in this state. So, please vote 'aye'."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 2296?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 69 voting 'yes', 38 voting 'no', 1 voting 'present'."

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The House does concur in Senate Amendments #1 and 2 to House Bill 2296. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Representative Weber, for what reason do you seek recognition?"

Weber: "Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please state your point."

Weber: "Ladies and Gentlemen, friends and colleagues, it was 12... May 12, two weeks ago today, that I stood before you and spoke on behalf of the thousands of children who benefit from the Invest in Kids Scholarship Program. A program that has opened the door for many children and given them the ability to dream of a better future. A program funded entirely by donations so that children from underprivileged families can receive a scholarship to attain a better education. As I looked through the budget, I was stunned to find out no mention of this program or the tax credit to fund it. You know, if this Bill had been a standalone, it would probably have been bipartisan support and passed both House and Senate overwhelmingly. Because of the actions of this Body, or rather the lack of action over the coming months, thousands of families and kids will be struggling to go to sleep at night and question whether their scholarship, the hope to improve their lives, or if their dreams of a better education have been snuffed out. Shame on everyone who kept this out of the budget. And shame on you, Governor Pritzker, and your lack of action to ensure a better future for these kids. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Remaining on page 6 of the Calendar. Under the Order of Concurrences appears House Bill 2204, Representative Costa Howard. Please proceed."

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Costa Howard: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to concur to House Bill 2204. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. We need to adopt the Amendment."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, I think the Motion is..."

Costa Howard: "Oh, I'm sorry. I apologize. I apologize, Mr. Speaker. Got ahead of myself. Motion to Concur, please."

Speaker Hoffman: "Please explain the... the Amendment."

Costa Howard: "Sure. The Amendment 1 is a gut and replace Amendment. It becomes the hydrogen tax... end user tax credit. And I would like to adopt the Amendment and debate the Bill on Concurrence."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, the Amendment is adopted. We are on Concurrence. And on that question is Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Windhorst: "Representative, what is the purpose behind these tax credits?"

Costa Howard: "Thank you, Leader Windhorst. The purpose behind the tax credits are to provide the end users of hydrogen a tax credit of \$10 million a year for over a 2-year period. Ten in 2027 and ten in 2028 is the maximum amount. The purpose of the tax credit, though, is for the State of Illinois to obtain the... have an opportunity to have a \$1 billion hydrogen hub from the Federal Government located here in Illinois."

Windhorst: "And this Bill just passed today out of committee unanimously and was unanimous in the Senate. Is that correct?"

Costa Howard: "Yes, Leader Windhorst, that is true."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Davidsmeyer."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Davidsmeyer: "I just have a quick question in regards to this... are we doing this so that we can receive federal dollars, federal investment in... in the State of Illinois?"

Costa Howard: "Representative, what this tax... this is part of the application process for the hub here that we are applying for to the Federal Government. There are six to eight hubs that the Federal Government is looking to put across the nation. Illinois is poised to receive that. And this is something that we want to make sure that... that the country knows that Illinois is open for hydrogen business."

Davidsmeyer: "And... and you said this would be how many billions of dollars in investment?"

Costa Howard: "One."

Davidsmeyer: "One billion dollars in investment."

Costa Howard: "At a minimum of that, yes."

Davidsmeyer: "And I just... I just want to say I think this is a good step in the right direction. We... we should do everything we can to bring all these opportunities to the State of Illinois."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Costa Howard to close."

Costa Howard: "Thank you. This House Bill 2204, our Senate Amendment, gives Illinois the opportunity to further demonstrate to the country that this is a place where a hydrogen hub should come. We are the leader of nuclear power here in the states with the most plants that are available and up and running. And this is something that will give us

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an opportunity to further diversify our clean energy goals here in Illinois. I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2204?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 103 voting 'yes', 2 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2204. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Moving to House Bill 2949, Representative Scherer. Representative Scherer, please proceed."

Scherer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the House, today I have a Bill that could save people's lives. It allows a camp after school caregiver, from a camp or something like that, to be allowed to issue a rescue inhaler if a child is under respiratory distress. It also allows them to use an EpiPen if need be. And of course, this would only be in cases of emergency. Happy to answer to any questions and appreciate an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Scherer has moved for the concurrence of Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2949. On this question, Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "She indicates she'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Representative, the individuals who would be either using the pens or providing the inhalers would have to be trained. Is that accurate?"

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Scherer: "Yes. That's part of this Bill. We already have this in schools, but this extends it to after-school care."

Windhorst: "Thank you. And this was unanimous in the Senate, wasn't it?"

Scherer: "Correct."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Scherer: "And unanimous out of committee."

Windhorst: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Scherer to close."

Scherer: "Appreciate an 'aye' vote. My last Bill for today. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2949?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 107 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2949. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. On page 6 of the Calendar appears House Bill 2300, Representative Nichols for Representative Will Davis. Representative Nichols, please proceed."

Nichols: "Thank you, Mr. Chair. House Bill 2300 makes a number of changes to the Illinois Jobs Workers Program (sic-Illinois Works Job Program) to further encourage the contracts and subcontracts to employ participants in the Illinois Works Preapprentice and Apprentice Programs."

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Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Nichols has moved to concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2300. And on this question, Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Representative, this deals with the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative and changes some of the... the requirements, I guess, or the way the program is implemented. Is that accurate to say?"

Nichols: "Absolutely."

Windhorst: "And specifically it deals with bid credits as well for that program?"

Nichols: "Absolutely."

Windhorst: "And how does this Bill change with those credits or how those credits are determined?"

Nichols: "Well, actually, in committee we worked it out. It was unanimous with no opposition to it. And it... it just makes it clear that this program does not affect anybody's small businesses or anybody that's hiring for contracting. It just actually gives them opportunity to hire people that went through the program. And some of the things we always talk about in the great State of Illinois, if you go through these programs and... and we just want to make sure that you able to have employment opportunities."

Windhorst: "Is there a requirement that the company be a union company to receive..."

Nichols: "No."

Windhorst: "...the tax credit?"

Nichols: "We worked that out in committee. No, Sir."



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Windhorst: "And there is a requirement regarding prevailing wage classification, that there be reporting on that. Does this in any way change prevailing wage or require it where it's not currently required?"

Nichols: "No. No, Sir."

Windhorst: "And I note that IMA and Chicagoland Chamber are proponents. Is that correct?"

Nichols: "Proponents."

Windhorst: "Are they... are they neutral on the Amendment, I'm being told now? Is that what you have? I'm sorry."

Nichols: "They were proponents."

Windhorst: "Thank you for your answers."

Nichols: "Appreciate you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Seeing no one seeking further recognition, Representative Nichols to close."

Nichols: "I just ask for an 'aye' vote on this. It's a great... it's a great Bill for the great State of Illinois and the great people in this state. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the Senate concur in Senate Amendment... shall the House concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2300?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; all opposed vote 'nay'. The voting's open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 109 voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no', 0 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 2300. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Moving on to page 4 of the Calendar.

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Under Senate Bills-Second Reading appears Senate Bill 424.  
Please read the Bill, Mr. Clerk."

Clerk Hollman: "Senate Bill 424, a Bill for an Act concerning  
criminal law. Second Reading of this Senate Bill. No Committee  
Amendments. No Floor Amendments. No Motions are filed."

Speaker Hoffman: "Third Reading. Returning to the Order of  
Concurrence. Under page 6 of the Calendar appears House Bill  
3445, Representative Lawrence Walsh, Jr. Please proceed."

Walsh: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think somebody might have got  
bingo with that. So, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I  
move to concur with Senate Amendments #1, 3, and 4 for House  
Bill 3445. With these Amendments, this is the energy package  
that has come back across from the Senate. And what this will  
do is, first, it amends the definition of public schools under  
the Power Agency Act to include higher education institutions  
so that public universities and community colleges could  
access renewable energy credits under the Adjustable Block  
program. And additionally, land owned by public schools, but  
maybe not on a public school, may be utilized for that REC  
underneath the Adjustable Block program. Secondly, it  
requires the IPA to conduct policy studies regarding the  
following proposals, which we have entertained here in the  
General Assembly this year. The first is House Bill 2132, the  
Rust Belt to Green Belt Pilot Program; Senate Bill 1587, an  
energy storage proposal; and third, the utilization of the  
proposed 500 Green high-voltage direct current line to  
transfer wind energy from Iowa to Illinois. And the IPA is  
required to complete and publish this study by March 1 of  
2024. Thirdly, it will create a right of first refusal for

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utilities in the MISO region only to construct transmission lines in their territory. And this provision will expire on December 31 of 2024. And the last thing this... the Amendments contain is the wind siting trailer language that was related to the trailer Bill that we passed in the Veto Session of last year regarding House Bill 4412. This was the Farm Bureau's request and language to kind of tighten up and clarify the Ag mitigation procedures within that. I'd be happy to answer any questions and respectfully ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Leader Davidsmeyer."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Davidsmeyer: "Mr. Chairman, this is... some people may say this a controversial Bill. Amendment 4 is... is the main part of it, right? The first right of refusal portion."

Walsh: "I would say the opposition that is around this is coming from Amendment #4, which is the right of first refusal. Yes."

Davidsmeyer: "So, when... when the State of Illinois deregulated energy, what part of the energy was deregulated?"

Walsh: "The generation and the supply."

Davidsmeyer: "So, is the transmission side still regulated as an industry?"

Walsh: "That is correct. Both are... both entities within the State of Illinois, Ameren and Commonwealth Edison, are regulated by the ICC."

Davidsmeyer: "So, in... in this, we're just asking that the... the required provider of transmission of public energy is given the first right to link into their own lines?"

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Walsh: "So, here... if the RTO, which would be in the area we're talking about, would be the Ameren territory, so it would be MISO. If MISO decides that it needs to build a high-energy line, let's just say from Peoria to Bloomington, the right of first refusal, if this Bill were to pass and signed into law, would give Ameren the right to basically say to MISO, okay, we'll take it on. They'll put it out for bid. Their contractors will then... they'll pick their lowest bidder and then proceed with the project under the guidance of Ameren Illinois."

Daidsmeyer: "Yeah."

Walsh: "If we don't have this, MISO can just go out to the market for open bidding. You can get anybody to come in here, could be out of state contractors. And then they put it up, but they're not working in direct correlation with Ameren Illinois."

Daidsmeyer: "So... so, MISO could come in here and interject themselves into our market?"

Walsh: "Yes."

Daidsmeyer: "So, how many... how many of the... of the 15 states that are in MISO, I believe 15, how many are currently have this first right refusal?"

Walsh: "Eleven."

Daidsmeyer: "Eleven. So, this isn't something that the State of Illinois is trying to recreate. This is something that's already working in other states?"

Walsh: "Yes. This has come as a result of what... it's called FERC rule 1000. And it's..."

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Speaker Hoffman: "Leader, I apologize. We're going to institute a three-minute time limit. Obviously, individuals can yield you time. Please proceed."

Davidsmeyer: "I... I don't need a whole lot of other time. I just want to continue with... I know there's opposition from environmental groups on this. And I just want to say that if you voted for CEJA, you already voted for no-bid contracts for this type of work. I... I think that this first allows the individual, the company that's currently providing the transmission to come in there and link into their own lines. So, I... I urge an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Ann Williams."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Williams, A.: "So, just a quick question, Representative. First starting with the issue of process. I know this Bill was primarily a study Bill that I'd heard of maybe a few days ago. When did Amendment #4 get considered and added?"

Walsh: "When it what? I didn't hear you."

Williams, A.: "When did Amendment #4 get added?"

Walsh: "I believe Wednesday."

Williams, A.: "Okay, today is Friday. Okay. So, my point here is that, looking at process, this was primarily a Bill dealing with the study of energy projects. And Amendment 4 was added at the eleventh hour, which seems to be the word du jour, phrase du jour. And you know, I think this deals with, if... it's my understanding, the MISO region has approved.. how many.. I have \$10 billion in projects related to transmission. Does that sound right?"

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Walsh: "MISO?"

Williams, A.: "Yeah, MISO."

Walsh: "Yeah."

Williams, A.: "So, I don't know. Just having a... I didn't know what a right of first refusal, ROFR, was, literally, until yesterday, and I've been working in the energy space for some time. So, I think to deal with a project of such a magnitude, in such a short period of time, without having time to fully vet it, is a significant problem. But I will move on. Just one more question for the Sponsor before I go to the Bill. Is this effort to provide the right of first refusal to a utility, is this something that could be sought by another utility, say up in the PJM region, ComEd, for example? Could they make a similar request?"

Walsh: "No, they didn't, because, first, there's no projects planned in that area as of right now. And from my understanding, is they have, they say a common law, that gives them that availability within their area as of right now."

Williams, A.: "Okay. But there's nothing stopping, say, a ComEd, or if their project's planned, for also implementing or requesting from the General Assembly the right of first refusal?"

Walsh: "Not to my understanding."

Williams, A.: "Okay. So, to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Williams, A.: "The Governor is opposed to this Bill. He's been very clear about this and has worked against it. And the primary reason, my understanding, is for the Governor's opposition, is due to the rate impacts. We're talking about

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\$10 billion investments. And that's a significant sum of money to consider in this project. So, as one of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle mentioned, deregulation occurred in 1997. The basic concept there is pretty obvious. If you have more competition, generally you keep rates down. Across the board, whether its generation or whatever it might be, it's common sense that a monopoly is usually bad for consumers. There's been a recent study by a well-known group that competitively... competitively-bid transmission projects can result in cost savings between 15 and 28 percent. Other studies have shown cost savings up to 50 percent. So, right of first refusal is definitely problematic. And when you're talking about investments to the tune of 10 billion, with a 'b', dollars, that's certainly a great concern. I also wanted to point out that the Attorney General is also opposed to this Bill and has called it anti-consumer and anti-competitive. And you know, I did hear from someone on the other side of the aisle, in relation to another Bill, that competition drives cost down. So, I'm hoping that everyone over there keeps that in mind when it comes to selecting how to vote on this Bill. So, I also note, when it comes to Attorneys General, that the DOG... DOJ and the FTC have issued a statement that outlines some concerns. This was issued in August of 2022. And they said that they are urging FERC, which is the federal... can we have some order? I can barely hear. Speaker?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Hernandez yields three minutes."

Williams, A.: "Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members. Members. Shh."

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Williams, A.: "Thank you. The FERC was urged by the FTC and the Department of Justice, in a rare joint letter, to not restore the right of first refusal that would enable incumbent electricity transmission owners to block competitors from bidding in design construction and new interstate transmission facilities. A couple of the highlights of the letter, they were concerned it would, number one, result in higher prices or lower quality; and number two, recognizing the benefits to consumers of having competition for transmission, design, and construction. So, you've heard it from the FTC. You've heard it from the Justice Department. You've heard it from the Governor and the Attorney General of Illinois. I will note that it's been billed as a pro-labor initiative. And I can certainly say that I, along with many of us on this side of the aisle, want to prioritize and ensure that any new generation projects or transmission projects, or anything related to energy in getting us to our renewable energy future are built with organized labor and the skilled trades people of organized labor. To suggest... I'm going to suggest an alternative that we can accomplish that goal without having to give one utility a monopoly. First of all, all transmission projects are built by union labor. Projects of this magnitude, of this complexity simply need to use the skilled trades people that are part of organized labor. And second, we have a chance to do an extra layer and follow the road map that we outlined in CEJA, and that's to implement project labor agreements as part of any transmission project. Including what we also did in CEJA, which was to include a lockout provision so management can't threaten workers with



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lockout if they don't comply. So, I think these are powerful tools to ensure we use union labor for these projects that don't risk rates impacts of the magnitude we're talking about here. So, just to... to close, I would argue... oh, one more thing. I don't know if everyone's had a chance to look at the list of opponents, but it's... it's quite significant. We have everyone from environmental organizations, we have some labor organizations. The business community has weighed in as well as the IML. A very significant group of opposition with very little time to vet all their concerns. So, for that reason, I would argue now is not the time to raise rates for already struggling Ameren customers. And we need to listen to the expert... experts in this area, follow the lead of the Governor in this case, the Attorney General, the Department of Justice, the FTC, and the numerous opponents. I would strongly urge a 'no' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Mah."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Mah: "Representative, have you had constituents complain to you about their utility bills?"

Walsh: "Yes, I have."

Mah: "What do they usually complain about? That their bills are too low?"

Walsh: "No. That they're too high."

Mah: "Do you agree that their utility bills are an important issue for all of our constituents and that we should be helping them with that?"

Walsh: "I don't disagree with that."

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Mah: "Do you think that we should be working on their behalf, on behalf of our constituents to bring energy bills down or to make them go up?"

Walsh: "I would say that we need to work on making them go down or to stay as level and not have huge increases. But what I will say is we've seen the huge cost of natural gas go up and the cost of energy has gone up, and that's why utility bill rates or electricity bill rates have gone up. It isn't the... it isn't the cost of the transmission."

Mah: "Do you agree with the business principle that competition fosters lower costs, prices?"

Walsh: "In most... in most aspects I would say, yes. But for the last hundred and some years, the... the people of this state, and I would say pretty much across the country, have said that power supply is a common good in where they have made basically what we call a regulated monopoly. And that is what we work under with the transmission of electricity within the State of Illinois."

Mah: "But mostly... do you... I mean, most of us understand that monopolies stifle competition and are bad for the consume, though."

Walsh: "Not going to disagree with that, but this is one entity that runs a whole system. If we want to have competition in there, you're going to have whole bunch of different transmission companies and you're not going to have reliable power."

Mah: "But my understanding is that if the company has the first right of refusal to take a job, in this case to build the transmission lines, and they don't face other bidders, if

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they want the contract, they... they automatically get it. They can set their own prices."

Walsh: "Who?"

Mah: "The company that has the first right of refusal."

Walsh: "So... so, what would take place is if MISO has a project, just as I explained, they want to run a power line from Peoria to Bloomington. They put it out. Ameren says we'll take it. Ameren puts that out for bid for a lowest... lowest construction price to do it through their contractors. But it's done under their purview because it's their system that they're... they are operating."

Mah: "But that doesn't prohibit them from bidding a... you know, putting out a bid that tends to be higher, right? I mean..."

Walsh: "No."

Mah: "...aren't there studies... I mean, the Representative who just spoke referred to a number of studies that show that competition is actually better for the consumer."

Speaker Hoffman: "Leader Ness yields three minute... or Representative Ness yields three minutes."

Walsh: "And I have studies that show where, in this process, those cost overruns from the low bidder have actually cost more to do these projects than what it would've been done if it was by the incumbent utility."

Mah: "But the study that you're referring to, who paid for that study?"

Walsh: "Concentric Energy Advisors."

Mah: "Isn't that essentially Ameren?"

Walsh: "No. It's a combination of a whole bunch of different companies. It was done nationwide. And I'm sure the studies

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that were quoted... opposition were done by, let's say a solar company. Everybody can do a study."

Mah: "From what I understand, Ameren paid for that study. Are you aware of other studies?"

Walsh: "Not off the top of my head, no."

Mah: "So, the previous speaker cited a couple of studies, and one of them is called Cost Savings Offered by Competition in Electric Transmission. That's the Brattle Group 2019. And then there's another one, FERC Transmission: The Highest-Yield Reforms. That's from 2022, and it says that competitive procurement works and studies show that cost savings from competitive procurements are in the range of 20 to 30 percent cost savings. To the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Mah: "We all have been hearing from our constituents about skyrocketing utility bills. We know from studies, that I've just cited, that the commonsense business principle that we all know is that competition fosters lower pricing. We also know that monopolies simply benefit the companies that hold those monopolies and consumers lose out. If we allow existing energy companies to hold this kind of monopoly and have the first right of refusal in the construction of power lines, they will be the ones setting the prices of those jobs and the inflated costs will be passed on to rate payers, our constituents. In my district, I serve a number of vulnerable populations, people who struggle with high costs of daily living, including housing, food, transportation, health care. The last thing they need is even higher utility bills that are passed on to them when a utility company is given a

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monopoly over construction line jobs in their area and noncompetitive bid costs get... gets pushed on to their utility bills. We're talking about seniors on fixed income, low-income immigrants, and everyday working families. They do not deserve to suffer the brunt of rate increases because we voted to allow these monopolies. I strongly urge a 'no' vote."

Speaker Hoffman: "On this question, Representative Yednock."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Yednock: "Around that question that the previous speaker brought up, Representative Walsh, is this intended to affect existing rights of public utilities in other parts of the state that is outside of MISO?"

Walsh: "Nope. This isn't intended to change any existing rights for any part of the state other than the area we're talking about."

Yednock: "Okay. Thank you. So, to be clear, this section is intended to affect the identified MISO projects only, then?"

Walsh: "That is correct. The Section won't affect other projects or change in any way the rules, laws which say how the other public utilities, municipals, co-ops currently manage, plan, or build their systems."

Yednock: "Okay. Thank you for the question."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Benton."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Benton: "Representative, I have a question that was proposed, and for legislative intent, can you explain the change to Section 1-75 of the Illinois Power Agency Act related to that 15

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percent renewable energy credit for solar for public schools?"

Walsh: "Yes. So, under current law, the REC pool solely, for solar projects at public schools, requires that the project be at the school. With the change that we put in the Bill, the intent is to allow for a project at the school or other school property. As is the case with the current law, the property must be owned and controlled by the school. It cannot be leased or subleased to ensure there's a benefit for the school and the school district."

Benton: "Thank you, Representative."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Miller."

Miller: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Miller: "One of the reasons why that we have the lifestyle we have is because of cheap, affordable, reliable energy. We've created this monster called CEJA. And one of the... one of the observations that President Reagan made was the most terrifying words in the English language was, 'I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you.' We've created this mess and now we're on the fourth Amendment to try to clean it up. You know, I work outside every day. I work in the environment. You know, it's a hundred degrees in the shade and 90 percent humidity. I don't sit around and whine about it being hot. When it's the winter time and I'm out feeding the cows and it's 20 below zero, I'm not whining about it being cold. And we've created a complete myth that is destroying the economy in Illinois, and eventually it will

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destroy the economy in the United States of America if we continue down this rabbit trail. You know, before CEJA happened, myself, Representative Halbrook, Representative Caulkins, we actually went on an energy tour. And we visited the Prairie State campus. We visited Hamilton Coal. We visited the nuclear power plant in Clinton. We visited the wind farms. We visited the solar fields. And we made a decision based on information and not our emotions or how we feel. I know one of the things that we found out at these energy producing plants, that everyone was running about almost a hundred percent capacity. And at that time, we knew that there was no way in the world we could shut down our... our existing power and still power our grid. And the net result of it is... was a war on the middle class and people can no longer afford to pay their doggone electric bills because of bad public policy. I know one thing about it, for the last 69 years, we've had a climate crisis. And we've gone from one thing to the other. When I was kid, we had global cooling, we're going to have the great freeze out, and 4 billion people were going to die. And then we went to global warming where the earth was going to return to a... turn into a frying pan, and we were all going to burn up. And now, we're on this myth we call climate change. And now, we're all going to change to death. One of the common threads that links all of these ideas together is none of it ever happened. And guess what? None of it is ever going to happen. We aren't going to be destroyed by CO2, and I would suggest that probably most of the people in this Body don't even know what carbon dioxide is. Here's a good dose of

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it. There's a little carbon dioxide for you. And guess what? Nobody's going to die. One of the things that..."

Speaker Hoffman: "Rep... Representative, Representative Wilhour gives you three minutes."

Miller: "But anyway, does anybody know how much carbon dioxide is in the entire globe? And I'm guessing probably nobody can answer that question. There's four hundredths of one percent of the entire world atmosphere is made up of carbon dioxide. During the Obama administration, the EPA said, if we do everything that we want to do by the year 2100 that... that we will increase the global temperature by two one-hundredths of one percent of a degree. It doesn't amount to jack squat. There's one thing that I know is in sound science, your observation dictates your conclusion. Your observation dictates your conclusion. And I know I have 69 years of observation, and I have come to the conclusion that this is a bunch of bunk, and we need to throw this all in the garbage. One of things that we... that I understand is, I understand earth science as a farmer. And there's a great mechanism that we call photosynthesis. It's an incredible... it's an incredible way that we clean up the atmosphere. Guess what? We have millions of acres of green, leafy plants that absorb carbon dioxide and to produce oxygen. It's amazing. It's incredible. Another thing it takes out of the atmosphere is sulfur. And guess what? We've taken so much sulfur out of the atmosphere, now as a farmer, I have to buy sulfur to put in my fertilizer mixes so I can grow the maximum production in corn. There's one thing that I know is our biggest threat to civilization is not climate change. But I know a lot of times



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that I think that our biggest threat to... to civilization is the hot air that gets produced in this General Assembly by passing bad public policy. No one can change the weather. Not Joe Biden, not Barack Obama, not JB Pritzker, not John Kerry. They cannot change the climate. People do what they really believe. And when you see these guys flying around the world in their private jets, they live in mansions on the beach, if they actually thought the world was doomed because of climate change, they would have a different lifestyle. Part of the lie is convincing you that electricity comes from magic, and we wave our magic wand, and all the sudden we produce electricity. And it's just not true. We are not having a climate crisis, but what we are having is we are having a crisis of common sense. And the only way... we're on the fourth Amendment to this Bill, and the only way to fix it is to have Amendment #5 and throw CEJA in the garbage and start over. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Blair-Sherlock."

Blair-Sherlock: "Thank you. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Blair-Sherlock: "Okay. I have a couple questions. So, Amendment 4 is obviously the Amendment that's causing concern. And I did not see anything in Amendment 4 that would regulate the price setting of the cost of these projects. So, I know you were discussing a competitive bidding and things like that, but I saw nothing in Amendment 4 that would limit the ability for... or set a structure for what they could charge for doing the job themselves."

Walsh: "As far as the utility?"

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Blair-Sherlock: "Yeah."

Walsh: "So, when a utility does any infrastructure improvements, they go in front of the ICC and show those costs. And they have to lay all their books out in front of them and... which they're doing right now. We've read in the news where they have to do a rate increase. That's part of it."

Blair-Sherlock: "I'm sorry. One second. I can't hear you."

Walsh: "Yep. Can we get some order?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, Members, please. Members, please. We have two more speakers after this and then the close. So, let's please keep the noise down."

Walsh: "So... so, right now, a utility, any expansions, any work they do, any improvements, infrastructure, et cetera, they have to go, if they want to recoup that cost, they have to go in front of the ICC and get approval. That is how the regulated utilities operate. So, all those costs, however much that is, even if they get this first... right of first refusal, whatever costs that they put on that that they have to do to put into this system, they go back to the ICC for approval with a return on investment."

Blair-Sherlock: "But they don't have to get competitive bids from subs, that's not a requirement?"

Walsh: "Well, that's their practice. I mean, most companies that have a major job to do are going to go out and put that for a competitive bid, and they take what they feel is the right one for them."

Blair-Sherlock: "Okay. Well, I first learned... oh, I'm sorry. To the Bill. I first..."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

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Blair-Sherlock: "I first learned about this Bill when I started receiving emails in opposition from my constituents. And then I learned of the Governor's opposition, and I learned about the Federal Government's position on similar types of provisions. And it... it's very disconcerting to me because I do know that there's a lot of concern in the state about the cost of utilities. I've seen my own utilities soar and people are concerned about that. And competition, which I... you know, is part of capitalism, does keep costs down, and I'm very concerned that the costs will be high. This is the second time in two days that I've been put in a position where I feel that a Bill has been presented very late, without a lot of opportunity to vet it. I think that there's flaws in it. And I also think that if there's concerns on behalf of labor, which I understand is a bit split here, it's not all in the same position, could be dealt with in the ways that an earlier speaker had discussed. So, I'm sorry, I can't vote for this Bill under these circumstances. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Members, two more speakers, so let's please keep the noise down. Representative Caulkins."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "Indicates he'll yield."

Caulkins: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Representative, this project... this part of the Bill that we're talking about, this... this particular Amendment, which is only one part of the Bill, is this at the behest of MISO asking... asking us to improve or build out this infrastructure?"

Walsh: "Well, what I will say is this Bill came to myself and the Senate Sponsor through the IBEW in response to a couple of

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projects that MISO wants to do in Illinois. And their workforce is very interested in making sure that they maintain that work."

Caulkins: "But I mean, MISO is saying that we need to..."

Walsh: "Correct."

Caulkins: "...do this?"

Walsh: "Yes."

Caulkins: "So, if MISO can... can ask us or tell us or demand that we build new transmission lines or improve the infrastructure, why can't MISO tell us to stop shutting down our generators?"

Walsh: "Well, they can if they decide that that's needed. They do have that availability."

Caulkins: "And... but isn't that... by the mere nature of the fact that they're asking or telling us that we have to improve our infrastructure, saying that we don't have the infrastructure, I guess, in place, that we have to bring in more electricity from outside the state rather than generate electricity within the state?"

Walsh: "So, here's what I can tell you, Representative. I'm... and it's my belief that the projects that were put forth by the RTO in the Ameren areas due to new renewable energy generation coming online and putting that infrastructure in to pick that up in a more cost-effective manner."

Caulkins: "A previous speaker made mention of the fact that this... this could increase our rates. Is that... is that the case? Or will our power bills increase because of this... these projects?"

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Walsh: "The right of first refusal is not going to increase anybody's rates."

Caulkins: "But isn't it... so, then our increased power rates that the previous speaker was so concerned about, aren't they the direct result then of us not generating enough electricity in Illinois, that we have to go outside of our boundaries to buy electricity?"

Walsh: "What I will say is for what happened in the MISO region and the Ameren territory this past summer is the capacity auction coned. It went from \$5 a megawatt day to \$236 a megawatt day. And that was the driver of the energy increase or the price increases in Ameren's electric bills."

Caulkins: "But that... that increase was because we had to go outside of Illinois and bid in the open marketplace. Had we been generating enough power in Illinois, we would not have had to of gone outside the... into the marketplace and bid against other states that needed more electricity."

Walsh: "Well, I..."

Caulkins: "We needed so much electricity that, actually, we drove up those rates, which increased the bills on everyone. If we would... would you agree with that, Representative?"

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative, Representative Niemerg gives you three minutes."

Walsh: "What I'll say with that is that the MISO region is a huge territory. And that was a systemwide shortage, not just in Illinois. And that's what the cost drivers are. I know there's been some changes over the... the last year and some retirements were postponed, and it's changed some of the pricing."

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Caulkins: "Well, I think it's... I think it's been very clear to u, in the two energy committees that the lack of generation in Illinois is really what's driving up the price of... of electricity to our consumers, to the middle class, to the working-class people in this state and that this project is going to have a minimal effect on... on our power bills. To... to the Bill, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Caulkins: "You know, Ladies and Gentlemen, it's really interesting to hear Members on the other side complain about Bills that show up without a lot of vetting. We hear this all the time. These Bills pop up. We ask for time to review them. We're going to vote on a budget tonight the same manner. If you're concerned about Bills popping up, being heard on the House Floor within minutes of being filed, I suggest that you come over here and talk to us and maybe we can work something out. This is probably a pretty good Bill. I'll support it. I hope you will. Thank you for your time."

Speaker Hoffman: "Final speaker, Representative Halbrook."

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

Speaker Hoffman: "He indicates he'll yield."

Halbrook: "Representative, we talked earlier. And I think in your opening comments that you talked Amendment 3 was a trailer to HB4412. And I just wanted to be clear that that dealt with the drainage aspect of farmland. Is that correct?"

Walsh: "That is correct."

Halbrook: "All right. And so, who all agreed to that language? Who was... who was there to discuss that and to come up with this final product in this Amendment?"

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Walsh: "This... this was the language request from the Illinois Farm Bureau."

Halbrook: "And... and there's like 1700 drainage districts in this state. Were any of the drainage district people discussing any of that?"

Walsh: "I think they were at the behest of the Illinois Farm Bureau."

Halbrook: "Okay. So, what is the... what is the teeth in this Amendment? What is the enforcement to make sure that the intent of your legislation gets fulfilled, and that the land owners, if they're damaged, if the land is damaged, that they are made whole again? What is the teeth? What is the enforcement in that?"

Walsh: "Would say it's the Ag mitigation agreement language that's in there and they would follow that... that process. The same they would do with pipelines and everything else that goes on."

Halbrook: "So, is the Department of Ag the law enforcement people there with that?"

Walsh: "With who?"

Halbrook: "Department of Ag. Is that the enforcement agency?"

Walsh: "Yes. It would be the Department of Agriculture."

Halbrook: "Is there any escrow or any money set aside or anything to... just to make sure this stuff gets done?"

Walsh: "Not under this Bill."

Halbrook: "Okay. So, we've heard again tonight a lot of talk, both sides the aisle, about the cost. Representative, do you think energy costs are high?"

Walsh: "They... yes."

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Halbrook: "Yeah. Ladies and Gentlemen, to the Bill."

Speaker Hoffman: "To the Bill."

Halbrook: "We are here tonight to pass a fixed.. a fix to CEJA that was passed in the fall of 2021. Ladies and Gentlemen, we live in the most productive area of the world and are blessed with an abundance of natural resources, coal and oil. However, due to a fear of coal and oil, many people have bought into a myth of the Illinois green bad new deal. Two and half years ago, we.. we predicted, with the passage of CEJA, that it would drive jobs out of the state, it would reduce energy reliability, it would cause us to import energy from out of state, and it would drive up costs. CEJA is bad public policy and needs to be replaced. The goals of FEJA and CEJA are unreasonable and unlikely to be met in a timely fashion. There's no plan to transition out of coal and natural gas and oil electrical generation into alternative energy sources. The lack of a well-thought-out and a well-executed plan will continue to cause harm and continue to increase the cost of living to every resident in this state. We need common sense solutions to address the important issues of the day. Band-Aid fixes after Band-Aid fixes to cover for bad policy just continues to be bad policy that will continue to drive up costs and drive our employers and our citizens out of the state. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "Representative Walsh to close."

Walsh: "Thank you. Thank you for the debate. You know, I get the process. Sometimes it doesn't work the way we all want it to. I been here now almost 11, 12 years, and there's always times that things pop up at the last minute, but we deal with. That



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being said, here's... what we've got before you is, one, a good package of... of energy proposals that... that'll move this state forward. And what I will say, as far as the right for first refusal, this is an 18-month window to take a look to see if this process works. There's a sunset date of December 1, 2024, that if it's not working the way we expect it to, then it goes away. So, with that, I... I, again, thank you for the debate and I ask for an 'aye' vote. Thank you."

Speaker Hoffman: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur in Senate Amendments #1, 3, 4 to House Bill 3445?' All those in favor vote 'aye'; opposed vote 'no'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 63 voting 'yes', 32 voting 'no', 2 voting 'present'. And the House does concur in Senate Amendments #1, 3, and 4 to House Bill 3445. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Leader Manley in the chair."

Speaker Manley: "He thinks I made you do that. Chair recognizes Representative Wilhour. For what reason do you seek recognition?"

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

Speaker Manley: "Please proceed."

Wilhour: "Thank you. As is becoming increasingly clear over the past couple of days, the budget proposal that we're going to consider tonight is not going to include an extension for the Invest in Kids initiative, which is set to expire at the end of the year. Folks, there are 9700 students receiving

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scholarships this school year in the State of Illinois. There are 22 thousand students on a waiting list to access these scholarships. Twenty-two thousand kids on the waiting list. Twenty-two thousand kids and parents that see the hope of a better education and a brighter future. Twenty-two thousand kids with a chance at educational opportunities where those opportunities would not exist otherwise. Twenty-two thousand kids is a testament to the success and the value of the program. But unfortunately, it seems the program has been too successful. It's become a threat to the failed education monopoly that's had its way in this state for way too long. In this government, in this Statehouse, anything that is perceived by... as a threat, anything that challenges full government control has to be eliminated. And let's be frank about this. This program is not on the chopping block because it has not been successful. It's on the chopping block because the teachers' union deem it as a threat to their control. That's why teachers' unions are telling you to kill the program. Don't buy their misinformation. The money being donated for these scholarships, it's not state money. These are private donations. At no... at no point in the history of this program have government schools received one less dime in funding. No teachers have lost their jobs. No schools have closed. Education funding for government schools has increased every single year that this program has been in existence, and as we stand here today, that funding is at record levels. So, why are teachers' unions against this program? The answer's pretty simple. The Invest in Kids program cannot be allowed to exist because it exposes the

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failure of our education system, the failure of our education bureaucracy, and the failure of the teachers' unions in this state. Parents of every income level deserve choice. Parents... parents are the best source of local control in education, but the teachers' unions and the education bureaucracy, and apparently a lot of people around here see parents as a threat. And so, to preserve the monopoly on education, the powerful teachers' unions are determined to make sure the families most in need of these scholarships will not be able to access them. Every single one of us in here says that we're for kids. Are we? Not today it seems. We are failing kids out of fear. Fear that if we don't bend the knee to the powerful public sector teachers' unions our campaign funds might dry up and we might lose an election. But here's the truth. Teachers' unions don't care about kids. All they care about is power, and we've seen that over the past three years. We've seen first-hand how teachers' unions and education bureaucracies have put their own selfish interests above what we knew to be best for kids, what we knew to be best for students in this state. Education should not be... education should be about kids, not about jobs, power, and the whims of political insiders. And before the ignorant and intellectually lazy diatribe over there about how we hate teachers, listen up, we respect teachers. We respect the calling and the unique skill set that it takes to enter the profession. We want great teachers that go above and beyond, and we want them to be highly valued and highly compensated. We want teachers to be able to teach about reading and writing and math and thinking critically instead of trying to make

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them be facilitators of left wing radical social experiments. We need teachers and we need to support them, but the primary focus of our education system should be the kids. Thousands of families who have finally had the chance to send their kids to good schools may not get that chance because of what your side of the aisle is doing to them. Now, I know that many of you support the Invest in Kids program. I'm old enough around here to remember 2001 in the... when we were talking about expanding the Invest in Kids program, where it was a big part of the original Black Caucus' education pillar until the Illinois Education Association came in and killed it and had that provision removed from the Bill. What happened to all that support? Is this program less important now than it was then? Is this program less beneficial to your communities now than it was then? Are you being pushed aside for the priorities of the far-left suburban squad? I don't know. But I do know that it's a fact that if we end this program kids from difficult situations are being denied opportunity. High-quality education and opportunity that it fosters are the key factors to stopping the cycle of helplessness, addiction, and the violent crime in places all across this state. Opportunity and education are the best violence prevention programs that we have. Do we really want to be the only state in the union that's going backwards when it comes to empowering families, when it comes to empowering parents, when it comes to empowering students with education choice? Or are you really going to stand there and deny kids the opportunity to have a good education and have a chance at real success because affluent lefties and the IEA don't like it and don't want it?

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Allowing this program to expire is a vote for failing schools. You all know what you're doing is wrong, but you'll probably do it anyway. But know this, whatever temporary pay off we're getting from this will never be worth the price of selling out kids. I'm ashamed of this Assembly for denying the tens of thousands of kids whose dreams of a good education won't come true because of your actions. So, once again in this chamber the special interests win. The citizens of the State of Illinois continue to be left behind because that's the Illinois way."

Speaker Manley: "On page 8 of the Calendar, under the Order of Resolutions, we have House Resolution 325, offered by Representative Cassidy. Representative Cassidy is recognized."

Cassidy: "Thank you, Madam Speaker, Members of the House. Last year... actually, also on our last Session day, in response to what was characterized as a massive surge in retail theft, we pushed through the creation of a new class of crime known as organized retail theft. In that... and in doing that, we talked about this surge. And I will say, fun fact, the CFO of Walgreens recently said, and this is a quote, 'Maybe we cried too much last year,' when he was acknowledging that the data did not support their claims of this surge. The Bill creates a problematic distinction between human victims of violent crime and corporate victims of violent... of crimes... nonviolent crimes. And in that moment when we passed the Bill, I was actually out with COVID and testifying remotely and told you the from the max headroom screen about the indignity that this provided, specifically to survivors of gender-based

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violence and sexual assault who attempted to raise the issue while the Bill was being crafted and were rebuffed. Also excluded from those discussions, were the folks who handle the victim witness notifications in the state's attorneys' offices across our state. We created a two-tier system whereby corporate victims get extreme deference from this system and have to be prioritized over actual violent crime victims. Working with the lead Sponsor of that Bill, Leader Buckner, we have spent the last year attempting to find a way to strike a balance between the needs of human victims, the impact on the services provided by state's attorneys' offices across the state while they have currently lost 50 percent of their victim witness funding as well as getting the added tasks associated with the Pretrial Fairness Act put on them. And the reality that... that these circumstances will cause is that our state's attorneys across the state will be required to provide... to put more time and energy into making notifications to Walmart and Target and other retailers. And as a result, violent crime victims will miss out on notifications. Our attempt to find a way to strike this balance has been rebuffed repeatedly. And so, today, I present House Resolution 325 to make clear that the intention of the State of Illinois is that we should prioritize human victims over corporate victims and that we should put... put some measures in place to ensure that those human victims get the deference they deserve. So, House Resolution 325 urges the judiciary and members of law enforcement to put their energy and resources prioritized towards human victims. And I ask for your support."

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Speaker Manley: "Representative Cassidy moves for the adoption of House Resolution 325. All those in favor say 'aye'; opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Resolution is adopted. Back on the Order of Concurrences. On page 6 is House Bill 3551, offered by Leader Jay C. Hoffman."

Hoffman: "Bingo. Thank you, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. House Bill... I ask that we concur in House... or Senate Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 3551. This is a bond authorization. It authorizes 700 million in new bonding authorization for the state with 165 million increase in the Capital Development Fund Bonds, \$535 million increase in Build Illinois Bond Funds, and a shift of 30 million in Coal Development Fund Bonds to Anti-Pollution Fund Bonds, and makes several updates to the various bond Acts to correct technical changes. I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Leader Davidsmeyer."

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

Speaker Manley: "He indicates that he will."

Davidsmeyer: "All right. I... I asked a couple questions in... in committee, and you kept referring to the budget and not knowing what's in the budget. So, we're borrowing, I think you said \$700 million. I think we had 719 million in our... in our numbers. But what are we borrowing this for?"

Hoffman: "This money could be used for various capital expenditures to the state. For the state."

Davidsmeyer: "Could be, but what are we borrowing for? Specifically, I mean, we... so, when I go into the bank to borrow money, I know the purpose specifically why I need 700..."

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they wouldn't loan me \$700 million. But just generally, when we borrow money, when we bond money, we should know what it's for, not just generally we're going to borrow money."

Hoffman: "There are various... as a result of not only the '19... 2019 capital Bill, but there... but subsequently, there are various capital needs throughout the state that this bonding... this money from the bonding authority could be utilized to put people to work. The specific projects that will be completed will be in conjunction with the various agencies with the... the GOMB, and whether it be a transportation issue, whether it be DCEO issue. So, we'll be working with the various agencies to make sure that the proper projects... this money is used for capital improvements to not only address our infrastructure problems in the state but to put people to work."

Davidsmeyer: "So... and I don't... I don't disagree with bonding for future investment. I do disagree with the fact that we should be borrowing for projects that were agreed to back in 2019 that were actually... that already had the bonding authority within the original agreement. So, I don't think that we should be bonding for past projects. Are we... are we bonding for new projects? Are we bonding 150 million for pork projects within the... within the budget?"

Hoffman: "So, it's my understanding that there are, from various capital projects that we've had before, there... there is revenue that now has been freed up as a result of things moving forward from the Rebuild Program in 2019, the Illinois Jobs Now in 2009, as well as the Build... Build Illinois Bond Fund and the Build Illinois Program. So, what has happened



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is, as things have gotten built, it has freed up revenue that can then be used to pay off bonds so we can bond out long term these infrastructure projects."

Davidsmeyer: "So, we kind.. we kind of reached our ceiling at one point. We've backed away from that ceiling, so we need to get back to that ceiling, continue borrowing the max amount that we can borrow?"

Hoffman: "I don't believe it's.. I don't believe it's the max amount we could borrow."

Davidsmeyer: "And I appreciate that, certainly. So, I.. I just go back to the projects that were agreed to in 2019. We already had the bonding authority. They already should've been bonded. So, where's.. where's the money for all those projects that were agreed to back then?"

Hoffman: "So, some of.. some of those projects were pay as you go. Not all of them were to be bonded. Some of them were pay as you go. So, you would build it on a pay-as-you-go basis with the revenues that were brought in as a result of what we voted on in 2019. Some of those projects have been built. A lot of them still have not been built. This would.. this would allow us to go back into some of these projects, get them built by allowing us to have resources to do so."

Davidsmeyer: "So, this does not have anything to do with the \$2.4 billion in additional spending that we.. that we, and I say we loosely, that your side passed in the 20.. Fiscal Year 2021 budget? That we didn't have money for back then. Are we reappropriating for.. for some of those projects?"

Hoffman: "I think a lot of those projects are reappropriated in this Bill."

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Davidsmeyer: "They are reappropriated. So..."

Hoffman: "Yes."

Davidsmeyer: "...in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget we did not have the money to do that?"

Hoffman: "Yeah, we... it's my understanding that the FY24 budget... I haven't gotten an answer since the Executive Committee. The FY24 budget, we've done no new spending in capital. We've only repurposed existing funds. And the bond authorization increase is not for additional spending. What it's to do is to take some of the projects that exist that are getting reappropriated and to have funding to bond those things... or to build those things."

Davidsmeyer: "Yeah. And... and I keep hearing both yourself and your... your lead budget person refer to no new projects. But I believe in Article... and I'm going to talk about the budget now, not in this Bill, but you referred to it. In Article 164 and Article 173, there's specifically new capital spending of \$150 million."

Hoffman: "I... I didn't say that there weren't any new projects."

Davidsmeyer: "Oh."

Hoffman: "I said that they're repurposing some of the spending."

Davidsmeyer: "So, did... did you reach out to the Governor's Office and send a letter to GOMB to let them know that... that you're going to do this?"

Hoffman: "They were involved in this whole process."

Davidsmeyer: "Because they're... they lay out a specific process in a letter from 2021 that says if you actually want to put a new project in, you have to tell which projects you are withdrawing. So, do we have a list of... or do we have copies

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of these letters and a list of these projects that we're withdrawing so that we can replace them with new repurposed projects?"

Hoffman: "I believe that if you looked in the Bill... and I'm... I'm not the... the budgeteer..."

Davidsmeyer: "Yeah."

Hoffman: "...and you maybe want to ask her that when we're doing the budget."

Davidsmeyer: "I... and I will, I'm sure."

Hoffman: "But if... but if you look into the Bill, there are strike and replace throughout the Bill. So, you can tell what... what has been done in that... in that regard. This simply is the bonding authorization in order to carry out some of those projects."

Davidsmeyer: "Okay. You know, I'm... I'm concerned. You know, I keep referring to the 2019 projects because, in my district, it wasn't ribbon cutting projects. It wasn't things that I could show up and hand out a big check. It was things like new radios for the sheriff's department that can't talk to each other across the county. It was safety things for the court house or for the... for the jail. So, the projects that are being held up in my district are safety concerns. And I'm very concerned that... that we had an agreement back in 2019 that these projects would be funded for the betterment of all of our districts and all of our projects were put on the back burner in... in favor of pushing forward politically-motivated projects."

Hoffman: "Well, I would just tell you that there are projects of mine as well that have not been funded. So..."

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Davidsmeyer: "From 2019 or from the 2021 \$2.4 billion?"

Hoffman: "From when we did the capital Bill, which I believe was 2019."

Davidsmeyer: "Okay. Because they... I would probably blame some of that on the additional 2.4 billion that was passed in Fiscal Year 2021. I... I want to go back to the Bill really quick. The reality here is..."

Speaker Manley: "To the Bill."

Davidsmeyer: "...we are... we are borrowing a bunch of money. We're not really told why we need to borrow this money. It's... it's just going to be thrown into the pot, and we're going to be using it for general capital stuff. The reality is you don't operate that way. You don't borrow based on possible needs. You borrow based on things that we know, and I think we need more answers to this question."

Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Leader Windhorst."

Windhorst: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. Inquiry of the Chair."

Speaker Manley: "Go right ahead."

Windhorst: "What is the vote threshold required for passage of this Bill?"

Speaker Manley: "Seventy-one."

Windhorst: "If this Bill should receive the constitutionally required number of votes, I request a verification."

Speaker Manley: "Thank you. Chair recognizes Representative Reick."

Reick: "Nice try, Madam Speaker. But I'm just a..."

Speaker Manley: "I almost gave you a promotion."

Reick: "Thank you. Will Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Manley: "He indicates he will."

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Reick: "Leader Jay C. Hoffman, I'm looking at this year's Senate Bill 250. I know we're jumping the gun here, but I see for here a \$750 thousand appropriation to the Village of Johnsburg, \$500 thousand to the Village of Ringwood. All these are coming... and a whole list of them. I'm looking at whole bunch of them that come from 2019. Shell games aside, bonding this, paying off bonds that, appropriating this, appropriating that, when can I go to the Village of Johnsburg or Ringwood or Union or Harvard or Marengo, any of those districts that were promised this money and tell them they're going to get paid and they can do the stuff that they were going to do? Let's not talk about bonding. Let's talk about when are these projects going to be paid for so that... or the money released so that these guys can fix their streets?"

Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Representative Didech."

Didech: "Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Manley: "He indicates he will."

Didech: "Representative Hoffman, thank you for bringing this Bill forward. Can you help... I see this... this Bill has to do with the Climate Equitable Jobs Act and the bonding authority for that. Can you help just kind of run through what... what this... how this Bill affects that program?"

Hoffman: "So..."

Didech: "I clicked on the wrong one. I apologize. Could you help... I don't know anything about this. Can you help explain what this does?"

Hoffman: "You got me on that one. And so, here's what it does. It... it goes to the bond authorization and what it says is, in order to get additional bond authorization, we have to pass

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the Bill but with 71 votes. That's under our Constitution. This would authorize an additional 700 million in new bonding authorization for the state with 165 million increase in the Capital Development Fund Bonds, 535 million increase in the Build Illinois Bond Funds, and it would shift \$30 million to the Anti-Pollution Fund Bonds. So, I... I assume the Anti-Pollution Fund Bonds, some of those... that money, once you sell the bonds, could be used for the... for what you had indicated earlier."

Didech: "So, then for the Build Illinois Bond Fund, that's... if you could refresh my memory, that's the capital program we passed a few years ago. Is that... is that correct?"

Hoffman: "Yeah. It's my understanding what happens is we passed the Rebuild Illinois back in 2019, and it's called Rebuild Illinois. But there are existing bond funds that we utilize in order to begin to build some of these things. And so, not only did we sell some bonds as we got revenue to pay those bonds back, but we also had a pay-as-you-go program. What has happened is, under some of these programs, whether it was Rebuild Illinois 2019 or Illinois Jobs Now in 2009 or Build Illinois way back when, what has happened is some of the funding for that, the revenue has become available. So, that revenue can then be utilized in order to sell more additional bonds to provide funding for these infrastructure projects."

Didech: "And so, this is something we do routinely. Is this something we do on an annual basis? Something we have to do to reauthorize this... this bonding program?"

Hoffman: "Well... yeah. So, what we used to do before, I think probably before the Rauner years, is almost every year we

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would sell some type of bonds and... with the revenue that is being freed up in order to continue some type of a infrastructure program, whether that's deferred maintenance, simple maintenance, or new infrastructure."

Didech: "So, is this for both... I know we have our vertical capital program, our horizontal capital program. Is this for one of those? Or is... does this include for bonds for both of those?"

Hoffman: "Yeah. It... this is not for the Illinois Department of Transportation. They have their own thing. And that is mostly by the Motor Fuel Tax. This is largely funded by the other revenues, what we said... called vertical capital in the 2019 Bill."

Didech: "So, this... this will go towards things like, I know we have a number of programs to renovate our community colleges, our universities, our public buildings, some not-for-profit centers. Those... those are typically the types of projects that'll be funded with this type of bonding authority?"

Hoffman: "Yes. And as you recall, part of the money that was going to be used for those types of projects, the quote, 'vertical projects', was through the addition of gaming. And gaming has been slow, because of COVID and a variety of other things, has been slow to materialize the new gaming positions. The VGTs, as you know, gaming, the VGTs adding additional machines brought in a significant amount of additional money for that. However, we've been slow to add the new casinos. They're slowly coming online. So, more revenue is coming. The department doesn't sell bonds unless it has revenue to back it up. So, as you go... the 2019 Bill was a six-year Bill. It was a six-year capital Bill. So, as you move through those

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six years, bonds are sold at various times in order to build those projects. So, this would allow for an additional \$700 million in bonds to be sold in order to fund many of those projects."

Didech: "So... so, this particular one we're voting on today, it will, if I heard you correctly, will authorize the sale of about 700 million more dollars' worth of bonds. So, that'll... coupled on top of the previous bond sales we've done, the pay-as-we-go funding that has happened, an additional \$700 million worth of investments in projects throughout our state, those vertical capital projects, our public buildings and other important projects that are important in all 118 districts throughout the state."

Hoffman: "Yes. And please remember, this is an authorization. This is not a mandate to the GOMB to sell today \$700 million in bonds. No. We authorize it now. When they see that the market is right, when they see that the revenue is being freed up, they then can sell bonds as we go. Maybe a hundred million at a time, 50 million at a time. It really is their call. They're the experts. We just give them that authority."

Didech: "Right. And the reason we have to vote on this today is, as you previously discussed, the Constitution requires us to vote by a 71 vote, Supermajority, in order to pass... authorize this sorts of bond sales, which, then, as we discussed, will be used for the variety of projects that... that you've been describing?"

Hoffman: "Yes. In order to increase our bonding authority in the State of Illinois, increase the amount of money that we can... we can actually bond, we have to have 71 votes in the House,



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36 votes in the Senate. It's my understanding that this vote... this passed overwhelmingly through the Senate in a bipartisan fashion of... but I guess it's not going to happen here. So, we need 71 votes."

Didech: "And so, this... and this is something we voted... as you said, we voted on this in previous years routinely. We're voting it in again this year. As the Build Illinois... the Rebuild Illinois Program continues in future years, we... we could expect legislation like this to come back before the Body to make sure we continue to have this consistent revenue to make sure these projects get shovels in the ground, improve these public facilities, and will have a pretty positive impact from top to bottom in Illinois."

Hoffman: "Yes. Like I said, we used to do these types of, I would call them mini capital Bills, every year. This is simply to continue the previous capital programs so that we can have \$700 million worth of authority to have that amount of capital being built."

Didech: "Well, thank you. I know... I know there's many other Members who wish to speak on this matter. So, I'll go... go to the Bill. I would just urge an 'aye' vote. This is a very important piece of legislation that the State of Illinois really needs to make sure that we get done to make sure that our very important historic Rebuild Illinois program, one of the most important capital investments in the State of Illinois history, can continue to improve our public facilities and people's lives throughout our state. Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I urge an 'aye' vote."

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Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Representative Reick, who I misread his body language and I apologize deeply for cutting you off. Please continue."

Reick: "Jeez Louise, Lady. You first elevate me to Leader, and then you cut me off. How fickle are you? Jay, I'm not going to filibuster like the last speaker did. I just have a simple question. When am I going to be able to tell the people of Johnsborg, Marengo, Union, Ringwood, Woodstock, all these people who have this bonding or this... these appropriations from 2019 sitting in the 2024 budget that they can start fixing their roads? That's all I want to know."

Hoffman: "Can I... I can answer for myself. I wish you would've already been able to do that. But unfortunately, there are several of my projects and everybody's projects that have not been totally gone through the process, released. A couple reasons. First of all, we had... we had COVID and we didn't get some of the vertical money that we needed in order to pay for bonds that... that would've been sold. However, now that's loosening up a bit, I hope that you can get them released as soon as possible. I'm for them."

Reick: "These are all horizontal projects, by the way. And..."

Hoffman: "But... but if they're not..."

Reick: "Yeah. I understand that, but the fact is, is that I think it makes for a lousy budgeting process if what we're having to do is constantly roll over projects that were in there for... have been in there for four years. I think it's... I think it's a little bit disingenuous to think that what we're looking at here is adding to the budget certain amounts that should've been paid or done four years ago. If you're not

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going to do them, don't do them. Just tell us we're not going to do them. Thank you."

Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Representative Gong-Gershowitz. Okay, thank you. Representative Hoffman to close."

Hoffman: "Thank you, Madam Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House. I... I appreciate the debate. And like I indicated, this is simply giving GOMB the authority to issue \$700 million in bonds when they see fit and, when they have the correct market conditions and the revenue to do so, to create jobs and economic development through infrastructure. I ask for an 'aye' vote."

Speaker Manley: "Members, Leader Windhorst has requested a verification. All Members will be in their seats and vote their own switches. The question is, 'Shall the House concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 3551?' This is final action. All those in favor signify by voting 'aye'; opposed vote 'nay'. And the voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 74 voting in 'favor', 37 voting 'opposed', 0 voting 'present'. Mr. Clerk, please read the names voting in the affirmative. Representative Windhorst has withdrawn his verification request. On this question, there are 74 voting in 'favor', 37 voting 'opposed', and 0 voting 'present'. The House does concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 3551. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. On page 6, House Bill 2395, Leader Evans."

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Evans: "Thank you. I'd like to concur in Senate Amendment #1 and 2. This is initiative of IDFP. Pretty much all of the licensing extensions and what have you for private detectives, plumbers, electrologists, veterinarians, landscape architecture, and public accountants. It extends the sunset debt... excuse me, date of all these professions to 2029. Request your support."

Speaker Manley: "Chair recognizes Leader Windhorst."

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

Speaker Manley: "He indicates that he will."

Windhorst: "Thank you. Leader, this is a omnibus sunset extension, several sunsets are extended by this Bill. Is that correct?"

Evans: "Yes, pretty much. And I think it was one Bill in which did something like added some emails and some technical changes in there as well. But for the most part, sunset extensions."

Windhorst: "And we showed this Bill incorporates extensions from five other Bills. I believe all of them except for one... one of those Bills passed either unanimously or with only one 'no' vote. This Bill passed unanimously in the Senate. Is that correct?"

Evans: "Yes. And also in committee, I was told."

Windhorst: "Thank you. To Members on our side, there was one that received 37 'no' votes involving the Plumbing License and Landscape Architecture Act extension. Depending on your feelings on that extension, vote accordingly."

Speaker Manley: "Leader Evans to close."

Evans: "I request your support."

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Speaker Manley: "The question is, 'Shall the House concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 2395?' This is final action. All those in favor signify by voting 'aye'; opposed vote 'nay'. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. On this question, there are 112 voting in 'favor', 0 'opposed', and 0 voting 'present'. The House does concur with Senate Amendments 1 and 2 to House Bill 2395. And this Bill, having received a Constitutional Majority, is hereby declared passed. Under the Order of Agreed Resolutions is House Resolution... House Resolution 340, Representative Stuart."

Stuart: "Thank you, Madam Speaker. I frequently, on the floor here, talk about our staff and talk about how we couldn't do the things that we do without having them here. This is an opportunity for us to... to give a deep thanks to someone who just served us here so well in the House for so long. Chief Counsel... our former Chief Counsel Justin Cox, who just did a tremendous job. We were so lucky to have him serving as our parliamentarian. And we're just happy that he is able to now spend more time with his family and has moved along to do the things he did. But I think we all want to just say again to Justin, thank you. Thank you for being so patient and for putting up with all of us and all of the crazy things that we always asked of you and the time that we... that you had to spend with us here in the chamber and beyond. You left big shoes to fill. I think that's being done very well. But we all appreciate the work that you always did here for us in

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the House of Representatives. So, thank you, Justin. And congratulations."

Speaker Manley: "Representative Stuart moves for the adoption of House Resolution 340. All those in favor say 'aye'; opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Resolution is adopted. And now, allowing perfunctory time for the Clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the House stand adjourned until Saturday, May 27, at the hour of 12:15 a.m. All those in favor say 'aye'; opposed say 'nay'. In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."