

STATE OF ILLINOIS
103rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
REGULAR SESSION
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

86th Legislative Day

3/5/2024

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

The regular Session of the 103rd General Assembly will please come to order. Will the Members please be at their desks? The invocation today will be given by Elder Mike Young, from the Main Street Church of the Living God in Decatur. Elder.

ELDER MIKE YOUNG: (Invocation)

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Please remain standing for the Pledge. Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: (Pledge of Allegiance)

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Due to the renovations in the Capitol, the Senate will be meeting in a temporary Senate Chamber here in Springfield's Howlett Building. While the temporary Chamber does not have a gallery, members of the public can still view the Senate's proceedings. There is a public viewing area in the Hall of Flags, also located on the first floor of the Howlett Building. Session will also be available to view online at ilga.gov. Ben Szalinski from the Daily Line seeks leave to take photographs of today's proceedings. Seeing no objection, so ordered. Lisa Yuscious from Blueroomstream seeks leave to video stream today's proceedings. Seeing no objection, leave is granted. Mr. Secretary, Reading and Approval of the Journal Senate.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Journals of Thursday, February 22nd and Wednesday, February 28th, 2024.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Hunter.

SENATOR HUNTER:

Mr. President, I move to postpone the reading and approval

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of the Journal just read by the Secretary, pending the arrival of the printed transcripts.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Hunter moves to postpone the reading and approval of the Journal pending the arrival of the printed transcripts. There being no objection, so ordered. Mr. Secretary, Resolutions.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolutions 804 through 808, offered by Senator Anderson and all Members. Senate Resolution 812, offered by Senator McClure and all Members. Senate Resolutions 813 through 817, offered by Senator Anderson and all Members. Senate Resolution 822, offered by Senator Murphy and all Members. Senate Resolution 823, offered by Senators Faraci, Rose, and all Members. They're all celebration of life resolutions, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Resolutions Consent Calendar.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Resolution 810, offered by Senator Fine. Senate Resolution 818, offered by Senator Stadelman. And Senate Resolution 821, offered by Senator Joyce. They are congratulatory. And Senate Resolutions 809, offered by Senator Joyce. Senate Resolution 811, offered by Senator Fine. Senate Resolution 819, offered by Senator Bennett. Senate Resolution 820, offered by Senator Fine and Senate Joint Resolution 50, offered by Senator Bennett. They are all substantive.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Mr. Secretary, Committee Reports.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senator Castro, Chair of the Committee on Executive, reports

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Senate Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 15 Recommend Do Adopt.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Mr. Secretary, Introduction and Reading of Senate Bills for the first time.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Bill 3909, offered by Senator Sims, an Act concerning appropriations. 1st Reading of the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Mr. Secretary, are there any Appointment Messages?

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Yes, Mr. President. Appointment Message 1030439, Governor's non-salaried appointment, to be a Member of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum Board of Trustees, Gary T. Johnson. Appointment Message 1030440, Governor's non-salaried appointment, to be a Member of the Energy Workforce Advisory Council, Lorenzo D. Savage, {sic}Jr. (Sr.). Appointment Message 1030441, Governor's non-salaried appointment, to be a Member and Chair of the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority, Leslie M. Darling. Appointment Message 1030442, Governor's non-salaried appointment, to be a Member of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, Christian Mitchell. Appointment Message 1030443, Governor's non-salaried appointment, to be a Member of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum Board of Trustees, Kathryn M. Harris.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Doris Turner, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR DORIS TURNER:

I have an announcement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

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Please state your announcement.

SENATOR D. TURNER:

So, you know that we are in the middle of March Madness, all things basketball. And the Senate Turner Caucus was in full effect over the weekend. There was a three, a - all tournament with the Lincoln Railers playing against the Chatham, Titans. And I have to congratulate the Chatham Titans on -- women on a fantastic season that came up just a little bit short. And I want to congratulate my colleague, Senator Sally Turner, on her Lincoln Railers being the Class IIIA Women's Championship Team with an undefeated season. Congratulations.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Sally Turner, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR S. TURNER:

Thank you for the recognition. I want to thank Senator Turner for her kind bet that we had and I won, so I get dinner. So anyway, congratulations to both Chatham and -- and Lincoln undefeated. So, we're -- we're proud of them. So, thank you so much.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Just need to say, for the record, that wagering is discouraged on the Senate Floor. Senator Rose, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR ROSE:

I'll raise you an introduction, if I may.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

State your introduction, please.

SENATOR ROSE:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm happy today to have with me

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Matthais Hacker. He is a sophomore at Lakeland Community College, which is in Mattoon, Illinois. He's studying pre-engineering on his way, hopefully to the University of Illinois, engineering college. And on the weekends, he says he likes to hang out with his friends, so it sounds like a good -- good college life to me. So, anyway, can we welcome to the State Senate.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Welcome to the State Senate. Senator Morrison, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR MORRISON:

Thank you, Mr. President. For the point of personal privilege.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Please state your point.

SENATOR MORRISON:

I'm proud to announce that on January 27th, the Lake Forest Dance Team won the ISHA 2A Competitive Dance State Championship for the second year in a row. The dance team works throughout the year, giving up their free time even over winter break and practices sometimes lasts up to 10 hours. They are deserving of our esteem and respect, and I'd like for this mention to become part of the permanent record in the State of Illinois.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Loughran Cappel, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

The purpose of an announcement.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Please state your announcement.

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SENATOR LOUGHRAN CAPPEL:

Well, today I would like to welcome my youth advisory board to Springfield and to the Illinois Senate. Their names are Eseena Hamm, Amelia Grisius, Allie Beinum, and Makayla Jones. I also have some staff members here today, Delaney O'Sullivan, Seth Williams, and then my Chief of Staff, Michelle Westerhoff. They are here today, and we're just thrilled to have them here. We appreciate their willingness to come and see how our State government works and to learn something from it, and also be a voice for our youth in the State of Illinois. So, I wanted to welcome them.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Welcome to Springfield. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, we're going to move to Senate Bills on 3rd Reading on page 6 of your printed Calendar, right in the middle of the page where President Harmon brings Senate Bill 15. This is final action. President Harmon seeks leave of the Body to return Senate Bill 15 to the Order of 2nd Reading. Leave is granted. On the Order of 2nd Reading is Senate Bill 15. Mr. Secretary, are there any Floor amendments approved for consideration?

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Floor Amendment No.1, offered by President Harmon.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Is there any discussion? Oh, I'm sorry. President Harmon, on your amendment.

SENATOR HARMON:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move to adopt the amendment.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Is there any discussion? Seeing none. All those in favor say, Aye. Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the amendment is

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adopted. Mr. Secretary, are there any further amendments approved for consideration?

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

No further amendments reported.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

3rd Reading. Now on the Order of 3rd Reading is Senate Bill 15. Mr. Secretary, please read the bill.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senate Bill 15, an Act concerning education. 3rd Reading of the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

President Harmon.

SENATOR HARMON:

Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. Senate Bill 15, as amended, represents what I hope is the last and final presentation of the authorizing legislation for the elected representatives school board for the Chicago Public Schools. This has been a long journey, and any legislative success has many parents. I do want to highlight the work of several, and I know there are so many folks in the Chamber now and in past who were committed to this issue. But Leader Lightford, our -- our Committee Chair, has long been an advocate for elected school board for the betterment of the pupils in the Chicago Public Schools. Senator Omar Aquino, our Vice Chair of the Committee, has also been a longtime advocate. But perhaps no one more so than Senator Rob Martwick, who, as I mentioned before, not only passed this bill in the Senate, but passed it in the House before he came here and has devoted significant political capital to seeing this come to fruition. So, I thank all of you for the work you have done on

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this, and hope that this is our -- our last and final time. In the fall, the Senate passed a bill that would create 20 districts and provide for the immediate election of 20 members of the Chicago Public School Board, as well as one Presiding Officer elected Citywide. That was a deviation from the original model that we passed when we authorized this, which would have provided for a 2-year transition hybrid model where half of the members were elected, and half were appointed. The House sent us a bill that did that, it created -- it took our 20 districts and combined them into 10, provided for the election of 10 members to 2-year terms and for 10 appointments by the Mayor. We didn't reach an agreement at the time. Since that time, I've received a letter from the Mayor of the City of Chicago asking me to present to you a bill that contained the House mechanism for transitioning through a hybrid board to a fully elected board, coupled with the strong ethical provisions that were included in the Senate Bill we passed over to the House and that's what's before us today. There's very little new in this bill that we haven't seen in one form or another. But we had a spirited debate in committee, and I'm sure that there are Members who would like to ask questions or share thoughts about the bill. And so, with that, I'd -- I'd yield to those Members, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Is there any discussion? Leader Curran, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR CURRAN:

To bill, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill.

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SENATOR CURRAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. Today in Exec Committee, we heard testimony on this -- on this proposal. We heard a lot of opposition. Heard from many members of the Chicagoland community, very invested in their schools, talking about the disenfranchisement that would occur if this bill passed. We also heard further discussion that there was a better bill, a better proposal, that was sent over to the House from this Chamber back in -- in Veto Session. I think, what has been really missing from this whole process is really the best available mechanism to -- to create a map, universally recognized around the country is the best, fairest way to do it. And that's a fair map, an independent map, drawn and created by an independent commission, free from politicians, free from political influence, free from power. That has not been a part of this process. And I think this process really, highlights why a -- a map drawn not by politicians, but an independent map drawn by an independent commission is the best process. When we look at the Chicago Teachers Union and where they started out in this process, they demanded a fully elected school board, all districts up at once. They were adamantly opposed to a hybrid model up until when? Up until the point in time their preferred candidate was elected the Mayor of Chicago. Then we saw the political process shift. The need for power shift. And they became proponents for a hybrid model. That would allow their chosen Mayor, their preferred Mayor, to remain in control of the board. We have not removed this process from -- from politics. It's a missed opportunity. The Senate Republicans opposed maps drawn by politicians. We've been very consistent on that. We are staunch proponents for fair maps, not gerrymandered maps drawn by

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politicians and therefore we will be opposing this bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Is there any further discussion? Senator Lewis, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR LEWIS:

To -- to the bill, please.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill.

SENATOR LEWIS:

So, this process started with our -- our new Mayor of Chicago, independent of how you may feel about him in this room, when he has been transparent with what he wants to do, he takes action and does it. And many of you may remember back in December, in a little -- deep in the -- the notes of the school board they put in a resolution to begin the - to dissolve selective enrollment schools, to change the structure of selective enrollment schools in Chicago. I looked up the top schools, high schools, in the State of Illinois. US News and World Report, let me get my glasses here, but No. 1 in Illinois, Payton College Prep - No. 10, in the nation; Northside College Preparatory High School, No. 2 - No. 37, in the nation; Jones' College Prep, No. 3. - No. 60, in the nation; Young Magnet, No. 4 - No. 63; and rounding out the top five - Lane Technical High School - No. 73, in the country. Our Mayor of Chicago has said he wants to change these schools. He wants to dissolve them. The crown jewels of Chicago are going to be put in jeopardy if we give this Mayor 11 people out of 21 to appoint. A lot of damage can be done, to excellent high schools. I ask for a No vote. Thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Is there any further discussion? Senator Preston, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR PRESTON:

Thank you, Mr. President. To the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill, Senator.

SENATOR PRESTON:

Prior to me coming to this Chamber, I was an activist in Chicago. One of the most important things that got me activated was the quality of schools in Chicago and the operation of schools in Chicago. As a parent of six, five of which who currently attend CPS schools. My wife and I are deeply active and engaged in our children's education, each and every last one of them. As a former local school council member, first as a community rep. prior to my children attending CPS schools and then as a parent/Rep., I have long fought for a fully elected school board, not this hybrid version. I recall a time not too long ago, when the very people that are advocating now for a hybrid, were standing in solidarity with me for the same thing. A fully elected school board giving parents in Chicago the same opportunity, the same responsibility that every other parent outside of Chicago enjoys, which is the opportunity to serve as the Representative Body over their children's education. Now, we voted in this Chamber in Veto, responsibly voted for a fully elected school board. And I believe that that was the best public policy and the most fair policy that has ever come out of this Body, at least in recent years, as it pertains to elected school boards statewide, particularly as it pertains to Chicago. I believe that that is the best policy we

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should be putting forth today. But political weight has been pushed to water down this bill. With that said, in the spirit of unity and progress, I want to thank our leader, Senate President, Don Harmon for helping us traverse through this difficult and very personal legislation to me, and putting forth the best possible version of a fully elected school board that we have before us, which is a hybrid model. But I have to rise, again, to let every parent in my district whether it's on the Chicago end or the suburban end, be very clear that your State Senator is down fighting for a fully elected school board and that is not what this bill is, but I will vote Yes on this bill because the best case scenario. But we should be standing firm on fairness to every single parent. Chicago parents deserve no less than what my suburban parents are getting. They're not going to get that out of this bill. We're taking one step closer, but we have the strength and we have the mandate from the people, ordinary people who don't have the political dollars, muscles and whatever. We have the will, the political mandate to be able to usher in a fully elected school board. That's not going to happen today. But again, it should. I'll vote Yes. And I encourage everyone else to vote Yes because it's a step in the right direction. But we could today achieve a fully elected school board. And that is what I'm still here fighting for. Thank you, Senate President, for getting us closer. But we could have gotten there all the way today. I wanted to touch down, not close to the goal post.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Further discussion? Senator Collins, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR COLLINS:

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Thank you, Mr. President. To the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill, Senator.

SENATOR COLLINS:

So, prior to me coming to the General Assembly, while working in a nursing home, I was very active with my organization, my union, SEIU healthcare and an allyship with families, community members fighting for a fully elected representative school board. My district is very diverse, but they are engaged in what's happening right now and what I would say is we are moving to a fully elected school board. It may not be right now, but we're going to get there. I want to also acknowledge the fact that it's important, and I think this is what I'm hearing a lot from my constituents, especially on the West Side of Chicago, that parents who have kids currently in schools advocating for their students. Now, I don't know what you know, other folks are doing in their district or what the thought process is there. But I know on the west side of Chicago where I represent where families are about to step into this new phase of a school board, they want to see something that's just. And transitioning from the House and coming over here to the Senate and voting on a fully elected school board and I understand all of the political stuff around it. My main focus is, is this going to help the kids? I do believe that. I do believe that we're giving families an opportunity to speak up and get those resources back to those schools that need it the most. I really don't like the fact that we're fighting about something that, to me is fundamental. I think every kid, no matter the zip code, deserves a good quality education. Yet in the African American community, we are still fighting for some of these basic

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necessities that our students deserve. And so, even though I do not fully agree with a hybrid model. But I do believe that this is the step that we're taking to get to a fully elected representative school board, and I want to thank the Senate President, but I also want to acknowledge those who have been fighting for this for a very long time, which is Leader Lightford, Senator Martwick, and the many advocates that have been fighting on the streets for years. And let's be clear, no other Mayor has ever kept their promise to get us to this point. No other Mayor. So, I'll close out with saying that I will be voting Yes today, because I do believe that we are going to get to a fully elected representative school board. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Further discussion? Senator Hunter, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR HUNTER:

To the bill, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill, Senator.

SENATOR HUNTER:

Earlier, this morning, I spoke, in committee, regarding this particular bill, and I got some very strong feelings about it. As a member, as an elected member, of the local school council in my district and not too far from my home, I know that my constituents wanted a hybrid model. And I voted for that. I'm sorry I didn't vote for the hybrid model. I wanted a 20-member elected school board. Okay. And I don't like this -- this model right now, it's -- it's - I want equity and parity. That's what I want. And I'm not very happy, but I want to commit -- commend the -- the Senate

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President for giving the Mayor what he wanted. But it's not too late, to amend the House version. I think we should have push, and I think that the advocates should push for the House version that we all passed, in this Chamber, and sent over there. Because I want a 20-member school board. That's what we agreed on. We held hearings on a fully elected 20-member school board. And now, somewhere down the line, some things have changed and I'm not very happy about that. So, I support - I'm going to vote for this bill today. I'm hoping that all of my colleagues over on the other side of the aisle and other Chambers can, open up their heart and their minds and amend that House Bill that's over there, because this is not a good version, in my opinion. Thank you very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Further discussion? Majority Leader Lightford, for what purpose do you seek recognition.

SENATOR LIGHTFORD:

To the bill, Mr. President.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill.

SENATOR LIGHTFORD:

Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, of the Senate. I rise to remind us of the importance of the subject, not the politics of the subject, but the importance of allowing residents, parents, children a fair shot at democracy, the ability to have someone held accountable. Chicago School District was the only school district in the entire State that was appointed. And it's been years, years. It's been Mayor after Mayor after Mayor that did nothing to allow families an opportunity to elect their representation. You know, there is a process in place and we all

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get it. But politics superseding the child that sits in that classroom really rubs me the wrong way. And here is a clear example of that. We establish a committee. I was honored to Chair that committee. We went all over the City of Chicago getting opinions from community stakeholders and advocacy groups and anyone who wanted to express their opinion. We had a bill passed. And then all of a sudden some happen - to something along the way happened that the focus shift, the focus shift. And so, I want to just bring all of us back to the real reason why this is needed. The children in the City of Chicago not all are failing. They're not in a position in a place to fight for themselves. We have to be their voice. We have to represent them. It's our responsibility, in this Body, to create an avenue for their parents to have a say. For the voting members of the City of Chicago to have a say. It's the third largest school district in the country. And yet we are here now, punting the ball back and forth from Chamber to Chamber. If the Mayor wants it, if CTU wants it, if this person. Who cares? When are we willing to put politics aside and educate our children. When? I would love to see that happen before I retire from this Chamber, that I don't have to stand on the Senate Floor and say, what about the child in the seat that cannot advocate for themselves. As long as I'm here, I'll raise my hand and I'll be that advocate for the child in the classroom. I'm not sure who's going to be happy, who's not going to be happy, and all the hidden agendas. It doesn't matter. The families deserve the right. The child deserves the right. We all say that we live in this society where we want to do better and we want more. This is a perfect opportunity for us to show that we are the leaders, that this is our responsibility and not just kick the can on down the road or

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the bucket or come up with all these fancy ways of saying, we're playing politics. I could care less if it was Mayor Brandon Johnson. If it was a Mayor before him, the Mayor before her, or the Mayor before him. Been through all of them. And they all wanted to control the board. Let the community control the board. Let the families control the board. Let the child have a say. I rise to support this legislation because we have to do our jobs. We have to hold ourselves accountable. We have to send a measure over to the House because we are the upper Chamber. We sent them a measure before, nothing happened. We're going to send them another measure. I'd hope this time that they respond. I hope this time that they respond, in a matter, that will allow us to not be back here again, having this debate. It has caused a lot of friction, a lot of Members not sure what to do. A lot of Members, not sure because we just heard all these opponents speak against it, but they were the same people who shaped it. The very same people who shaped it. So, hidden agendas, yes. Hidden agendas, politics, before our children education. It has to stop, you all. I vote -- I will encourage everyone to vote Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Senator Martwick, for what purpose do you seek recognition?

SENATOR MARTWICK:

Thank you, Mr. President. To the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

To the bill.

SENATOR MARTWICK:

So, I want to begin by saying that "I don't agree with the provisions of this bill." And before I explain that I want to just take a little walk down the history of this because, while a lot

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of people have spoken to the history of the bill, I would at least argue, that I might know it better than anyone. The motivation for an elected school board was a -- was truly a grassroots movement. It started with local community groups, with people who were upset at the decisions that the Board of Education was making, and they would show up to their meetings and they would be resoundly dismissed. School closings in massive amounts, in some of our most economically challenged neighborhoods, in the City of Chicago. And when people went and said, "Our neighborhoods lack most anything, but we have a school, please don't close it." They're just given a brush off. Under Mayoral control, everybody knows I like pensions, one fun fact that I like to bring up is once the Mayor of the City of Chicago was given the authoritarian control over the schools that they currently have, the -- that was in 1995 or 1994. But the first -- one of the very first actions was that they skipped a pension payment, which like to any one of us who understands the finances of pensions, that's crazy. How do you skip a pension payment? Well, newsflash, they didn't skip just one, they skipped a decade of pension payments, ten in a row. And that pension fund went from 107 percent funded to the mid-40s, where it is now, and to those of us who have students in the Chicago Public Schools and our taxpayers, our dollars don't get to the classroom because 25 percent of them have to be pulled off the top to resolve a debt that was just -- just the epitome of financial irresponsibility. So, this movement started a long time ago and it did not start -- and I want to correct this narrative because it's used a lot and I understand why. But this movement did not start with the Chicago Teachers Union, it started with neighborhood groups that organized, and in 2011, they put a question on the

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ballot in Chicago and some wards and that, not - all of them, it was an advisory referendum and it received over 90 percent favorability. The people of the City of Chicago wanted a -- an elected school board. And so, many people will then think, well, then Martwick filed a bill. That's not true. Someone who's not being mentioned here today, and who has long been a champion and I want to make sure he gets his due, who filed the first bill for an elected school board here in the General Assembly with Senator Elgie Sims. And -- and that was in 2013, I believe. In 2014, I started -- I campaigned on it, in 2012. I started working on it, immediately and in 2015, I filed my bill that, by and large, is what you see here today, by and large. It was a long process. It finally, became a law in 2021. I imagine that I filed the bill in 2015, became a law in 2021, and here we are today. It's almost a decade later that I've been working on this issue. And, you know, I -- I -- what I would say is this, "As I have -- as we've gotten to this point where we're at today, and again, I respect every - all of my colleagues here and I respect all the things that you're feeling. What I would say is, "God loved democracy." Right? I often have a saying in democracy, you don't get what you want, because if you got what you want, well, it wouldn't be a democracy. It would be a dictatorship. And, well, you'd be the dictator, which would be good for you. But in a democracy, you have to compromise. You have an idea, and people around you say, "Well, I have a vote and I don't agree with your idea, and I want you to compromise." And, when this bill was close to passage in 2021, as the Senate President mentioned, I passed the bill in the House. What a lot of people don't know is I actually passed that bill that year in the House and then came to the Senate and Senator Aquino had been the

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Senate sponsor, and he gave it over to me. So, I passed the same bill in both Chambers. And during that process, when it became real, when it looked like it was going to pass the General Assembly, we had some pretty serious negotiations, very serious. The Mayor of the City of Chicago, the previous Mayor, got involved, got very active and involved. We had lots of negotiations. They were very, very rough. And we came up with an agreed bill we went to the House and we said, "Will you pass this bill with these provisions on it?" And they said, "Well, we want a couple other things" and we sat there and we nailed up a bill that would finally, after seven years, pass the General Assembly. And we did. And by and large, the bill that's up today, is what we passed. So, I said, "I don't agree with it." Let me go back to what I said about democracy. Yes, I wanted a fully elected school board, but the compromise was that we would have a transitional phase that was what we agreed to, that's what the Senate passed, that's what the House passed, that's what this represents. Is that what I wanted? No. But that was the compromise that I agreed to, that's what the Governor signed, that's what the House passed on concurrence, that's what we have here today. Is it perfect? No. But when you figure out what the perfect form of democracy is, would you let me know? We exist in democracy as governments for one reason, it's a word we all love, the only thing that we do is reform. We find laws that aren't working and we say, "We got to fix that and make it better." We find a situation that's going on in society and it's problematic and we come here and we say, "We got to fix it, we got to make it better." Is this perfect? No. Will it operate flawlessly? No. Will it provide every outcome we ever desired? Absolutely not. But we'll never get a chance to fix it, if we don't

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implement it. This is not the elected school board bill, folks, we passed that a few years ago. This is just implementation and if you don't like the Mayor and you don't like CTU, and you want to know who's in control and you think there should be more elections, well, let's get this thing implemented. Let's start putting the power in the hands of the people so they can vote and create a government that they like. And if there's problems, we'll come back and fix it. I'll join you, I'm open to it, but please let's get started. I want to point out one other thing. There was a lot of thank you given around, and I want to thank everybody, there are so many people who really got involved in this. So, to all of you who have fought in your neighborhoods for it, who have started your political careers over advocating for something like this, I thank you for what you've done, and I thank all of my legislative colleagues who were there in the really dark times when we really had to negotiate this very hard. And I thank the Senate President, for attempting to steward this across the -- the line. It's been a rough road, welcome to my world. But I want to point out that this was grassroots, and I won't remember everybody, but these were and I met with these people and I know Senator Sims did, before me, twice a month for eight years. People like the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Parents for Teachers, Raise your Hand, I'm going to forget somebody, Northside Action for Justice, Kenwood Oakland Neighborhood Organization. These people volunteered and worked for years and years before I got there. We get the privilege of making their dreams of democracy become a reality. Let's finally do that today. Please vote Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

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President Harmon, to close.

SENATOR HARMON:

Thank you, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate. There has been much passion and frustration surrounding this effort, not for days or weeks or months, but for years and decades. And that's appropriate. What we're about to do today is one of the most consequential things we will do in our legislative careers. We are making a new democratic form of government from whole cloth and getting it across the finish line. I appreciate the debate. I'm very sympathetic to the opponents. This is not a perfect bill. There is no such thing. I still think the superior bill is the bill that the Senate passed in the fall that sits in the House Rules Committee. If the House had a change of heart, they could send that to the Governor today. I don't expect that they will. But doing nothing is not an option. We -- we have to take action. And there are some things that I know about this bill that are good. The 20 districts that we are creating are sound, they represent the citizens or residents of the City of Chicago. The ethics provisions that the Senate insisted upon are strenuous, and they will hold the school district members to the same standard as every other school board member across the State. And as folks have said, this transition period is going to be rough. They're going to be ups and downs. They're going to be things that go right and things that go wrong. But that's what we're debating. What I know for sure is that in 2026, in the blink of a political eye, the Senate model will actually be in place with 20 members elected from 20 districts. A fully elected representative school board in the city of Chicago will exist for the first time. And for all the ups and downs I anticipate, that something all of us should be

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very proud to have been a part of. So please vote, Aye.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Senate. It's been a long debate. If you can check your laptops to make sure they're awake before we open the voting, please do that now. The question is, shall Senate Bill 15 pass. All those in favor will vote Aye. Opposed, Nay. The voting is open. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Take the record. On that question, there are 37 Senators voting Yes, 20 voting No. Senate Bill 15, having received the constitutionally required majority, is declared passed. The Senate will stand at ease for a few minutes to allow the Committee on Assignments to meet. Members of the Committee on Assignments please meet in the front room. The Senate stands at ease. (at ease) Senator Koehler in the Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR KOEHLER)

Just a reminder for everyone that committees will meet after we adjourn here at 3 p.m. We have Education in Room 212. We have Public Health at 3 p.m. in 400. We have Judiciary at 3 p.m. in Room 409. Then at 5:00 we have Transportation in Room 212. We have Health and Human Services at 5:00 in Room 400. Senator Cunningham, back in the Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Mr. Secretary, Committee Reports.

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Senator Lightford, Chair of the Committee on Assignments, reports the following Legislative Measures have been assigned: refer to Agriculture Committee - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3077; refer to Appropriations Committee - Senate Bill 2631; refer to Appropriations Education Committee - Amendment 1 to Senate

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Bill 2209; refer to Appropriations Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee - Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3586; refer to Behavioral and Mental Health Committee - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3137; refer to Environment and Conservation Committee - Senate Bill 2876, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2781 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3342; refer to the Executive Committee - Senate Bill 3666 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2805; refer to Insurance Committee - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2573, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2671, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3203, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3318 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3665; refer to Judiciary Committee - Senate Bill 3674, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2644, Floor Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2834, Committee Amendment 2 to Senate Bill 2930, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3182, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3323, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3331, Committee Amendment 2 to Senate Bill 3421, Committee Amendment 2 to Senate Bill 3460, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3513 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3551; refer to Labor Committee - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3650; refer to Licensed Activities Committee - Senate Bill 2660 and Committee Amendment 1 or I'm sorry, Committee Amendment 2 to Senate Bill 2822; refer to Revenue Committee - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2695, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2704, Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 2784 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3617; refer to Special Committee on Criminal Law and Public Safety - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3353. Be Approved For Consideration: Senate Resolution 620, 640, 644, 645, 651, 660, 670, 676, 725, and 747. Pursuant to Senate Rule 3-8(b-1), the

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following amendments will remain in the Committee on Assignments - Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3130 and Committee Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 3421. Signed, Senator Kimberly A. Lightford, Chair.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR CUNNINGHAM)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, a reminder the deadline to pass Senate Bills out of Committees is Friday, March 15th. The deadline to file Committee amendments to Senate Bills is this Friday, March 8th. Please have Committee Amendments to Senate Bills filed by noon on Friday, March 8th. Thank you. There being no further business to come before the Senate, the Senate stands adjourned until the hour of 12:30 p.m. on the sixth day of March 2024. The Senate stands adjourned.