

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025.

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JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.

At a General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, begun and holden at Boston on the first Wednesday, being the first day of January, in the year two thousand and twenty-five, and the two hundred and forty-ninth of the independence of the United States of America, and the one hundred and ninety-fourth General Court of the Commonwealth, the following named members-elect of the Senate, having been duly summoned by the Executive, assembled at twenty minutes past eleven o'clock A.M., in the Senate Chamber, to wit:-

- Hon. Paul W. Mark of Becket..... in the *Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District.*
- Hon. Paul R. Feeney of Foxboroughin the *Bristol and Norfolk District.*
- Hon. Michael J. Rodrigues of Westportin the *First Bristol and Plymouth District.*
- Hon. Mark C. Montigny of New Bedfordin the *Second Bristol and Plymouth District.*
- Hon. Julian Cyr of Truroin the *Cape and Islands District.*
- Hon. Pavel Payano of Lawrencein the *First Essex District.*
- Hon. Joan B. Lovely of Salemin the *Second Essex District.*
- Hon. Brendan P. Crighton of Lynnin the *Third Essex District.*
- Hon. Bruce E. Tarr of Gloucesterin the *First Essex and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Barry R. Finegold of Andoverin the *Second Essex and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Adam Gomez of Longmeadowin the *Hampden District.*
- Hon. Jacob R. Oliveira of Ludlowin the *Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester District.*
- Hon. John C. Velis. of Westfieldin the *Hampden and Hampshire District.*
- Hon. Joanne M. Comerford of Northamptonin the *Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester District.*
- Hon. Edward J. Kennedy of Lowellin the *First Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Patricia D. Jehlen of Somervillein the *Second Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Michael J. Barrett of Lexingtonin the *Third Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Cindy F. Friedman of Arlington.....in the *Fourth Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Jason M. Lewis of Winchesterin the *Fifth Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Cynthia Stone Creem of Newtonin the *Norfolk and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Karen E. Spilka of Ashlandin the *Middlesex and Norfolk District.*
- Hon. Sal N. DiDomenico of Everettin the *Middlesex and Suffolk District.*
- Hon. James B. Eldridge of Actonin the *Middlesex and Worcester District.*
- Hon. Rebecca L. Rausch of Needhamin the *Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. William J. Driscoll, Jr. of Miltonin the *Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth District.*
- Hon. John F. Keenan of Quincyin the *Norfolk and Plymouth District.*
- Hon. Michael F. Rush of Bostonin the *Norfolk and Suffolk District.*
- Hon. Dylan A. Fernandes of Falmouthin the *Plymouth and Barnstable District.*
- Hon. Kelly A. Dooner of Tauntonin the *Third Bristol and Plymouth District.*
- Hon. Michael D. Brady of Brocktonin the *Second Plymouth and Norfolk District.*
- Hon. Patrick M. O'Connor of Weymouthin the *First Plymouth and Norfolk District.*
- Hon. Nick Collins of Bostonin the *First Suffolk District.*
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- Hon. Lydia Edwards of East Bostonin the *Third Suffolk District.*
- Hon. William N. Brownsberger of Belmontin the *Suffolk and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Robyn K. Kennedy of Worcesterin the *First Worcester District.*
- Hon. Michael O. Moore of Millburyin the *Second Worcester District.*
- Hon. Peter J. Durant of Spencer.....in the *Worcester and Hampshire District.*
- Hon. John J. Cronin of Fitchburg.....in the *Worcester and Middlesex District.*
- Hon. Ryan C. Fattman of Suttonin the *Worcester and Hampden District.*

And were called to order by the Honorable Mark C. Montigny.

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At the request of Senator-elect Montigny, the Senators-elect, guests and staff then recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of allegiance.

Invocation.

National Anthem.

The Invocation was given by Rabbi Joseph B. Meszler, Temple Sinai of Sharon. Thank you for this honor, and a special thank you to my cousin Senator Karen Spilka for inviting me to give this invocation. I want to specifically congratulate her on this occasion and thank her for her leadership. You make our family very proud.

Invocation.

My family has now lived in Sharon, Massachusetts for twenty years. We have been welcomed, we have raised our children here, and we have seen them thrive. Our children have benefited from our public schools, robust community programming, a commuter rail to take us into Boston or Providence, and beautiful natural resources, like Borderland State Park, Moose Hill, and Lake Massapoag. We work out at the local YMCA, shop at Ward's Farm, and get ice cream at Crescent Ridge Dairy. We can go to the beach in Nantasket or to the mountains out west. We have cheered our sports teams through ups and downs. My synagogue has hosted many community events, from Interfaith Thanksgiving prayer services to blood drives. If my Jewish ancestors from Eastern Europe could see us now, they would say we are the most blessed people on earth.

We have also endured together as a community. We have managed through Covid, walked in the Walk for Hunger, the March For Our Lives, the Mother's Day Walk for Peace, the Winter Walk, and reached out to our interfaith allies. We have lobbied for less hunger and for more housing. We have stood strong against hate and had community dialogues, even and especially when they were hard. We have welcomed immigrants to our community, driven our new neighbors to the laundromat and made sure their kids were dressed and equipped for school, and we have volunteered to do our part to help any neighbor who is in need. We have shown up for each other.

A version of my story, I imagine, is also your story. I imagine each one of you has your own lists of strengths and challenges in the communities you represent. My story and your story is our story, a story we share. And for those of us who do not feel part of our story but need to be, let us bring them in as part of our community. I know Senator Spilka and my Senator, Senator Paul Feeney, have worked tirelessly to make sure no one gets left behind. They have made employment, poverty, mental health, housing, disabilities, gun safety, education, and veterans at the center of our agenda. Thank you for your advocacy and being champions.

We have learned that we can face challenges, and we do better when we do so together. As Americans and residents of Massachusetts, we can face good times and bad with cooperation.

What we need now more than ever, the story of right now, is a continued spirit of openness, collaboration, friendship, and the common good. It is in that spirit I pray that your work for the Commonwealth be blessed and endure as you work together.

Thank you.

Communication.

The following communication, together with the returns of votes and schedules referred to, was received from the Secretary of the Commonwealth and placed on file, to wit:

Return of votes
for Senators.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02133

January 1, 2025

To the Honorable Senate:

I have the honor to lay before you the returns of votes cast at the election held in this Commonwealth on the fifth day of November, 2024 for Senators in the General Court in the several districts, together with schedules showing the number of ballots which appear to have been cast for each person voted for.

These returns have been duly canvassed by the Governor and Council, and are now transmitted for examination by the Senate, as required by the Constitution and General Laws.

Very Truly Yours,
WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN,
Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Keenan,--

Ordered, That a special committee of the Senate to be appointed for the purpose of canvassing the votes for Senators in the several districts.

Canvass votes for
Senators.

Senators-elect Comerford of Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester, Payano of First Essex and Fattman of Worcester and Hampden were appointed to the committee.

Subsequently, Ms. Comerford, for the said special committee, reported that the following named persons had been duly elected, to wit:

- Hon. Paul W. Mark of Becket..... in the *Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District.*
- Hon. Paul R. Feeney of Foxboroughin the *Bristol and Norfolk District.*
- Hon. Michael J. Rodrigues of Westportin the *First Bristol and Plymouth District.*
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- Hon. Ryan C. Fattman of Suttonin the *Worcester and Hampden District.*

The report was read, and the report was considered forthwith and accepted.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Kennedy,--

Ordered, That a committee be appointed by the Chair to wait upon Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, Her Honor Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth, the Honorable Council and inform them that a quorum of the Senators-elect have assembled and are ready to be qualified.

Governor, et al,--
inform that quorum is
present in Senate.

Senators-elect Cronin of Worcester and Middlesex, Finegold of Second Essex and Middlesex District, Kennedy of First Worcester, Miranda of Second Suffolk, Velis of Hampden and Hampshire and O'Connor of First Plymouth and Norfolk were appointed to the committee.

Subsequently, Mr. Cronin, for the said committee, reported that the committee had waited upon Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, Her Honor Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth, the Honorable Council, and the Constitutional officers and had conveyed to them the message of the Senate; and that the Governor had asked him to say that she would be pleased to attend forthwith upon the Honorable Senate, with the Her Honor Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth and the Honorable Council, to administer the oaths of office. The report was accepted and the committee was discharged.

Soon after, Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, Her Honor Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth, the Honorable Council, arrived in the Senate Chamber.

The Senators-elect then took and subscribed the oaths of office required by the Constitution and a law of the United States to qualify them for the discharge of their duties as Senators at eight minutes before twelve o'clock noon.

Qualifications of
Senators.

The Governor briefly addressed the Senate.

Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, Her Honor the Lieutenant Governor, Kim Driscoll and the Honorable Council then withdrew from the Senate Chamber.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Ms. Creem,--

Ordered, That, pursuant to the provisions of Senate Rule 4A, the Senate shall

Election of a

proceed forthwith to the election of a President.

President.

Mr. DiDomenico placed in nomination for President, of Ms. Karen E. Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk.

*Nomination Speech for Karen E. Spilka to be Elected Senate President
By Senator Sal N. DiDomenico.*

I have the privilege to rise and nominate my friend, Senator Karen Spilka, as our Senate President.

Statement of Senator
DiDomenico.

President Spilka has led us with dignity, honor and respect, and she understands that our job is to find and listen to the voices that are not often heard. Bringing people together from different backgrounds, different parts of the state, and different perspectives - she not only listens but she amplifies those voices and lifts them up. I am proud to work with her because she prioritizes helping those most in need.

I worked closely with Senator Spilka when I served as her Vice Chair of Ways and Means. We spent a lot of hours together with our staff, going line item by line item, to ensure that we were funding every program fairly and responsibly. I saw her passion and determination firsthand through these years and I'll never forget how important it was to her, and how she demonstrated that importance every day, to understand that we have the immense responsibility to help residents throughout the Commonwealth. She didn't take that lightly then or since - she knows how important our work is and that everything we do in this building has the ability to make lives better for the people we serve.

Like many parents who began their careers in elected office, Senator Spilka ran for a seat in the Legislature to fix the inequities in education funding that had negatively affected her home community and pushed to find solutions to mitigate the impacts of these inequities. It is no surprise that one of her first priorities as Senate President was to pass landmark legislation in the form of the Student Opportunity Act that brought the largest amount of funding to our schools in the history of our state and made the distribution of those funds much more fair for our local communities.

She has expanded on this to ensure that we focus on educating the whole child from their earliest ages to adulthood by passing comprehensive early education and care legislation and spearheading the passage of free community college. Her commitment and perseverance to getting all of this done has added to the legacy of a Mom who ran for office to give all young people an opportunity to reach their full potential. And I might add - I will take the liberty of giving her the title of our Education President.

Part of what makes her skillful at her job is that she has been there. Senator Spilka was a working mom of children who are now grown. She herself went to a public state university. Her own mom was a social worker as is she, and her dad was a veteran. Her sister was born with Down Syndrome. Her dad suffered mental health challenges during his life from his unmet needs as a veteran. These life experiences shaped her as person and thus shaped her priorities as a legislator.

Her commitment to serving individuals and families in need is extraordinary. I have all been at her doorstep to ask for help with issues we care about and that are important to our district. In my case with universal school meals, an increased clothing allowance, more funding for early education and early intervention, reforms with the earned income tax credit and child tax credit, wage theft, food insecurity, and countless anti-poverty initiatives. She is ready, willing and able to help because she shares this commitment to those who need our help the most. Simply put - she

wants to find ways to lift people up.

Senator Spilka was in the House when she voted for Massachusetts to become the first state in the US to allow same-sex marriage. She has been early and ardent supporter of LGBTQ issues, including transgender protections. Senator Spilka doesn't back down from the hard fights; she stands up for people who need allies and advocates.

I've focused on Senator Spilka's compassionate side, hopefully painting a picture of a woman who uses her gifts to reach back and change people's lives. Senator Spilka is a compassionate leader, and she is also a tough, wise and effective leader. Leadership is hard and leadership can sometimes be lonely. To be an effective in this role requires making difficult decisions, and it is not for the faint of heart.

Senator Spilka understands the importance of including all perspectives and points of view. She has been and continues to be accessible to all members of the Senate and allows everyone to have a voice. Senator Spilka builds consensus in our body and finds "win-win" solutions across the board. Senator Spilka has also earned the respect of her colleagues inside and outside the State House because of her collaborative leadership style and can-do attitude.

An esteemed leader once said, "Now more than ever, Massachusetts has a greater imperative to lead on issues with real impact on people's lives." That is a quote from our Senate President and she has turned those words into action. During her tenure as our Senate President, she has led the passage of landmark legislation in housing, climate change, education, life sciences, transportation, economic development, health care, mental health care, clean energy, prescription drugs, gun reform, veterans' services, long-term care and so much more. She shares these impressive legislative accomplishments with us all. Contrary to what you might hear, under Senator Spilka leading the way, we have had one of the most successful legislative sessions in recent memory.

Many people would like to forget the pandemic (I know I would), but let's not forget who led this body through that extremely challenging time. Senator Spilka and her staff organized all of us senators and our staffs into various working groups so that we could tackle the issues that were coming at us more efficiently and effectively. We had daily conversations and spent countless hours learning from each other, communicating and updating details, and helping our constituents deal with the conditions of this very scary and deadly crisis.

During that time, Senator Spilka also spearheaded the Patients First legislation which eliminated barriers to care and advanced needed supports for hospitals, testing sites, medical staff and telehealth services. While many states were forced to cut their budgets, Massachusetts was not one of them, and it was largely because of the foresight of Senator Spilka. When she was the Senate Chair of Ways and Means, I remember her insistence in ensuring we put away funds proactively to prepare for a time when we would need it. When the pandemic hit, this preparation allowed our state to not only avoid cuts to essential services and social safety nets, but actually expand support for housing stability, food security, unemployment benefits, and relief for the hospitality and restaurant industries. Putting money away to ensure a robust rainy-day fund is not the type of issue that gets headlines in the newspaper, but Senator Spilka did it and continues to do it because she knows it is the responsible thing to do.

I will say that show me who a person surrounds themselves with and I will tell you what type of person they are. Senator Spilka has surrounded herself with a great team of knowledgeable, skillful and good and decent people – with many being with her for many years. She values the contributions of her staff, and our staff

throughout the Senate and she has shown that numerous times through her actions during her time as Senate President. And she has a loving and supportive home team with her husband, Joel, and her children Heather, Scott and Jake – and not forgetting her dogs Lincoln and Mikasa.

Senator Spilka has skills and characteristics that uniquely position her for effective leadership. Her training as a mediator has helped her build consensus in our body, being a social worker has given her the tools and skills to lead with compassion, her career as an attorney has given her the determination to ensure that the rights of everyone are respected and protected.

She has been a mentor to so many and admired by even more. She has created a culture of inclusiveness and brings a spirit of collegiality across the aisle that keeps the critical work of this body moving forward. She works each day to bring success to each one of us individually and to the State Senate collectively.

I am proud to serve with Senator Spilka and proud to call her my friend. With the uncertainty at the national level, we need President Spilka's leadership more than ever. She leads with her heart but is not afraid to make the tough decisions that this job requires and that is why I once again say that I am proud to nominate Senator Karen Spilka as President of the Massachusetts State Senate.

The nomination of Senator Spilka for President was seconded by Ms. Edwards, who also briefly addressed the Senate.

*Seconding Speech for Karen E. Spilka to be Elected Senate President
By Senator Lydia Edwards.*

Thank you Mr. Dean for this opportunity to second the nomination of Karen Spilka for Senate President. I would like to nominate Karen Spilka, for Senate President.

Statement of Senator
Edwards.

First of all, again, happy New Year to all of my colleagues. To the new colleagues that have joined us, welcome. Excited to work with you.

Before I go through the accolades and discuss the many reasons and things that Karen Spilka has done in her leadership role, I want to talk a little bit about the woman that is Karen Spilka and who I got to know. Next to my mother, who is a retired Air Force NCO, I often describe her as the combination of grace and power. And next to my mother's grace and power, I can honestly say that Karen Spilka embodies that as well. Seeing the two combined, seeing both being powerful, being gracious, being compassionate, it's a skill set. A lot of people who have power don't know how to wield stand down and listen. The skill sets that it takes to do that is the reason why we are so successful as a body.

I have to say that a lot of when I first met Karen Spilka, I was running around this building trying to pass a domestic worker bill of rights. She was Chair of Ways and Means. I've been prepared repeatedly about how this person, the Chair of Ways and Means, is a very powerful person. And you can't just go in there and be disrespectful. You're going to have to know everything and present yourself well and make sure everyone's prepared, make sure everyone understands how to address her, make sure she does everything. She came in, sat down, and said, how are you doing? And welcomed us, the nannies, the house cleaners, the advocates, to simply tell our story. Why did it matter that someone who cleaned houses for a living got paid a decent wage? Why did it matter that the young woman or man who was working as a nanny had an actual contract? And she didn't require anyone to speak in terms of legal terms or lobbyist grandiose phrases. She just wanted to hear what they had to say. That is grace and nerve. That is power and grace. But it's also an empowering moment for a lot of people who are frightened and nervous about coming into this

building. The chair of ways and means, just wanted to listen. That was my first impression of her.

I got to know her even more when we had a retreat. And we sat down, and we all had to be matched, as you remember, and we asked all these personal questions of each other. And Karen and I sat down and got to know each other a little bit more. And I got to know about the little girl who played basketball, how much she loved to play basketball. And she did it regardless of what the boys thought of her.

I got to hear more about the sister of a sibling with Down Syndrome and what that means as a family member to know how people see someone you love, how they treat them differently, how protective you are of them, how angry you are that people won't get to know the true love and spirit, see them as a full human being deserving of love that they are.

I got to hear more and connect with her as the daughter of someone who is severely mentally ill and how she had to grow to understand that love appears to be a burden on a family and is often clouded by some things that people cannot control, their mental illness, to learn to love, to grow, and to forgive, something I've had to learn, and she's demonstrated to me.

We were able to bond, but those incidents demonstrate, as my colleague mentioned before, of a leader. It informs how you see policy differently. It informs who you listen to, who you invite in, who you empower. Martin Luther King said once that power without love is reckless and abusive. Love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.

So, when I think about Karen's leadership style, Karen's leadership style, and the juxtaposition in the way people oftentimes take power in one hand and separate it from love in the other, they need to be together. They do not function without each other. You mix that combination, the grace, the upbringing, and you see then in the many things she was able to do by empowering all of us, working with all of us, and pushing for a more just world.

I think about education being vital to my ability to be here today, public school education free, having access to band, art, having access to, at the time, driving ed, all of those things being part of the whole child understanding and a pathway to the middle class for me, my family. She is the education president. She is the whole child president. She makes sure that from the cradle to the college dorm, from the highchair to the halls of any higher institution, there are resources that demonstrate the care, the love, the power that we have in the Commonwealth for every child. In-state tuition, that's for every child. Access to community college for every child. Student opportunity program, universal school meals, that is a whole child approach, an understanding of the entirety it takes, not just to walk into a building, but to have after school sports, to be fed, to have early child education before you can walk into those buildings, to build those blocks. We have expanded all of that with her leadership. The whole child, the entire education system has been reformed and changed under your leadership.

Access to justice, we can look at many things. Access to counsel, that has expanded. And we have a pilot program under your leadership, eviction sealing under your leadership. I know that the daughter, mentally ill parent, was directly involved and informed the greatest expansion of access to mental health in the Commonwealth's history.

I know that the girl who was in access to sports and was leading when other people said she couldn't, you were vital to assuring that we had gender equity and assuring that every young person who takes on the opportunities to work in this

building especially, to work for us, because we don't function without our staff. And under her leadership, it was the greatest expansion of staff salaries, assuring equitable analysis, making sure that there's leave for the staff members that want to have children or adopt children, the greatest expansion of our staff's respect and dignity and pathway to the middle class.

We can talk about passing this year universal access to prep, making sure that adoptions happen to love families regardless of how they look.

We can talk about access to even low-income fares, transportation, expansion of the waterfront, transportation systems. All of that happened because of her leadership style.

I get to work with some of the best and brilliant people in the Commonwealth. I truly believe that about all of my colleagues. But your brilliance and your ability to shine your light has everything to do with the leader that we choose. Boy, did we shine brightly. We shined brightly this session especially. Comprehensive housing, we didn't forget about the veterans, we didn't forget about our seasonal communities. We went all over the Commonwealth and assured that after this session, it is a brighter, greener, fairer, and just place to live.

So, I can't help but nominate Karen Spilka to continue that leadership, to continue to bend the moral arc more towards justice. Because in this building, in this body, we don't declare a mission accomplished. We celebrate our wins, but we also say mission is now aligned. We are now focused. We have done what we can do, but we need to do more. We listen still. We know that housing is still an issue. We know substance use is still an issue. And while we continue to push and bend, we need a leader who encourages us, each single one of us, to continue to shine our light to do so. So, I, again, would like to nominate Karen Spilka for Senate President.

The Chair, Mr. Montigny recognized dignitaries in attendance including United States Senator Edward Markey.

Mr. Durant placed in nomination for President, of Mr. Bruce E. Tarr of Essex and Middlesex.

*Nomination Speech for Bruce E. Tarr to be Elected Senate President
By Senator Peter J. Durant.*

Thank you Mr. Dean.

First, I wish a happy and productive new year to you and our colleagues and a hearty welcome to our new members. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve alongside you, and I look forward to collaborating with all of you as we embark on the important work ahead.

I rise today to nominate the Gentleman from Gloucester, Senator Bruce E. Tarr, as President of the Senate.

Senator Tarr is a remarkable legislator whose contributions have left a lasting impact on this body and the Commonwealth as a whole. Serving as our fearless Minority Leader for 13 years and acting as a catalyst for many great bills, I am happy to pounce on this opportunity to nominate Sen. Tarr.

When I was elected to the Senate just over a year ago, I had the privilege of witnessing his dedication and effectiveness firsthand. I found Sen. Tarr to be a mentor, an amazingly knowledgeable resource and a friend. He is a steadfast leader, calm under pressure but ready to claw through any obstacles when there is a need.

He does so because Senator Tarr builds relationships that stand the test of time. Those relationships are rooted in trust and mutual respect. Every bill he touches is scrutinized with unparalleled thoroughness. He ensures that every perspective is

Dignitaries.

Statement of Senator
Peter J. Durant.

considered and every detail is addressed.

As a skilled orator, Senator Tarr wields the power of language to inspire action and bring about meaningful change. He has seen the corrosive effects of division in other halls of government—state and federal alike—and he has consistently championed a better way. Here, we focus on dialogue, not discord; people, not politics. And we work together for the betterment of our communities and our Commonwealth.

In many legislatures, a caucus of five might be dismissed or overlooked. But here in the Massachusetts Senate, every voice matters, and every perspective is valued. That inclusivity, that spirit of collaboration, owes much to the culture Senator Tarr has helped foster.

With a seaside district, there are unique challenges and opportunities: the fishing industry, coastal erosion and tourism. Sen. Tarr has been an advocate for his district, working with the fishing industry to creatively overcome hardships. He cares greatly about the coastline and special features of his district.

Sen. Tarr is a fiscal watchdog, responsible for authoring the law which created the MBTA Fiscal Control and Management Board. He cares about common sense spending of our tax dollars and holding government accountable.

One of my favorite moments came recently as we worked into the wee hours of New Years eve trying to pass legislation while the clock was ticking down the final hours of the session.

Sen. Tarr rose, more than once, to point out the inefficiency of this process; of waiting until the 11th hour, in an informal session, to pass important bills, some of which should have had more time for open discussion.

As Senate President, I believe Sen. Tarr would help to streamline the legislative process and add transparency to the work we do.

While his background as an attorney makes him well-suited to his craft and advance legislation, I shouldn't stray from my main point which is this: Sen. Tarr sets an example for us all with his care, concern for the people of the Commonwealth and the institution that is the Massachusetts Senate.

He has said that this is the most important part of his job, and I agree.

There is nothing more satisfying than helping a constituent in need navigate their way through bureaucratic red tape to land softly on their feet.

Sen. Tarr cares about the elderly and works to make Massachusetts affordable so they can stay in their homes, afford heating oil and worry less about unfair taxes.

He cares about families and reaches across the aisle on many issues that help Massachusetts' residents. His social media shows that he attends more events in his district than one could believe possible. He cares deeply and finds ways to honor the citizens of his district, as well.

Recently he filed, and spoke eloquently about, legislation to recognize 100-year-old Robert "Boots" Chouinard, a Veteran and member of the Greatest Generation who was also a long-time DCR employee. Mr. Chouinard's name will now grace the lifeguard building at Salisbury Beach. What a beautiful way for visitors to learn about someone so important to his district.

So today, I ask for your support for someone I am proud to call both a colleague and a friend—the distinguished gentleman from Gloucester, Senator Bruce E. Tarr. His leadership, his character, and his commitment to the values we hold dear make him an exceptional choice to lead this great institution.

In reality, I know many of you think my nomination doesn't have a whisker of a chance of passing but our caucus is growing and perhaps, if you really consider it, you'll realize that Sen. Tarr's district knows his value and continues to send him to

Boston for a reason.

We, too, should recognize his value and as we enter this new political era, put our faith in him to lead us into the future. Let's elect him as Senate President.

The nomination of Senator Bruce E. Tarr for President was seconded by Ms. Dooner, who also briefly addressed the Senate.

*Seconding Speech for Bruce E. Tarr to be Elected Senate President
By Senator Kelly Dooner.*

Good afternoon and welcome to our families, our friends, new and returning senators. Thank you all for joining us today on such a wonderful occasion and thank you for coming out on New Years Day none the less. Through you, madam president, first off, Congratulations to all the new and returning senators, I look forward to all we can accomplish to move Massachusetts forward in the right direction.

Statement of Senator
Dooner.

We have all been put in this position to represent not only our districts, but to represent the commonwealth of Massachusetts with integrity, honesty and bipartisanship. Today is not only a swearing in ceremony, but it's a day where we elect our next senate president. And today, it is with great honor, I rise to the occasion to nominate a friend, a mentor and a true leader, the gentleman from the first Essex and Middlesex District, Senator Bruce Tarr as President of the Massachusetts State Senate. Senator Bruce Tarr is one of the most effective legislatures we have seen pass through the senate, one I think many of us in this chamber admire for his perseverance, intelligence and ability to reach across the aisle working with everyone for what is in the best interest of the commonwealth of Massachusetts as a whole. Senator Bruce Tarr has passed significant legislation, from ☐ A primary sponsor of The Circus Animal Bill known as An Act Regulating the Use of Elephants, Big Cats, Primates, Giraffes and Bears in Traveling Exhibits and Shows.

Instrumental in the Tax package known as An Act to Improve the Commonwealth's Competitiveness, Affordability, and Equity; ☐ Passed an amendment to the Economic Development bill granting authority to the Division of Marine Fisheries to remove abandoned fishing gear from the Commonwealth's Waters.

And passed an amendment to the FY2025 Budget for a feasibility study for the development initial promotion of a software application to identify, evaluate and access resources for maternal and infant health.

Senator Tarr has made significant progress for the commonwealth with the odds and numbers generally stacked against him. If any one of us in this room were to go to Senator Tarr with a challenge we are facing, his door would be wide open to help us navigate and find a solution.

He helps his constituents daily, he doesn't see political affiliations, he sees people, he represents people, and he advocates of all people. Senator Tarr exemplifies what it means to be a true public servant.

Being the first woman to ever hold this Senate seat, it is truly an honor to stand before you today and respectfully ask for your consideration and support for one of the most compassionate people I know, Senator Bruce Tarr for president of the Massachusetts State Senate.

On motion of Mr. Rush, the nominations were closed.

The roll was called at nineteen minutes before one o'clock P.M., and the following named members voted for Karen E. Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk:

The following named members voted for Karen E. Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Barrett, Michael J. | Gomez, Adam |
| Brady, Michael D. | Jehlen, Patricia D. |
| Brownsberger, William N. | Kennedy, Edward J. |
| Collins, Nick | Kennedy, Robyn K. |
| Comerford, Joanne M. | Lewis, Jason M. |
| Creem, Cynthia Stone | Lovely, Joan B. |
| Crighton, Brendan P. | Mark, Paul W. |
| Cronin, John J. | Miranda, Liz |
| Cyr, Julian | Montigny, Mark C. |
| DiDomenico, Sal N. | Moore, Michael O. |
| Driscoll, William J. | Oliveira, Jacob R. |
| Edwards, Lydia | Payano, Pavel |
| Eldridge, James B. | Rausch, Rebecca L. |
| Feeney, Paul R. | Rodrigues, Michael J. |
| Fernandes, Dylan A. | Rush, Michael F. |
| Finegold, Barry R. | Spilka, Karen E. |
| Friedman, Cindy F. | Velis, John C. – 34. |

The following named members voted for Bruce E. Tarr of First Essex and Middlesex:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Dooner, Kelly A. | O'Connor, Patrick M. |
| Durant, Peter J. | Tarr, Bruce E. – 5. |
| Fattman, Ryan C. | |

ANSWERED “PRESENT”.

Keenan, John F. (*present*) – 1.

The Chair announced the results of the votes as follows:

Whole number of votes	40
Necessary for a choice	21
Karen E. Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk had	34
Bruce E. Tarr of Essex and Middlesex had	5

The roll call having been completed at a quarter before one o'clock P.M., Ms. Spilka was declared elected as President of the Senate.

Mr. Tarr moved that it be the sense of the Senate that the vote for Karen E. Spilka for President should be made unanimous and that this expression of opinion be made a part of the records of the Senate.

Sense of the Senate.

There being no objection, this motion was entertained; and it was unanimously adopted.

Ms. Spilka was escorted to the Chair by Senator Feeney of Bristol and Norfolk and Senator Kennedy of Worcester.

The President then addressed the Senate as follows:

Thank you. Thank you to all of you. I am incredibly humbled and almost on the verge of tears out of respect for all of you; but thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to some of my guests starting out with my husband Joe, and my son Jake Loitherstein who is here today, I love you both, along with my other son who is a teacher so could not be here today; Scott and his wife Sandy Cuesta and Heather, I love you all so much. As all of you know our families are our support and give us the resources and the strength to do this job on

Remarks of Senate President Karen E. Spilka.

so many days when it's tough so I couldn't do this without all of you so thank you so much.

I'd like to thank members of my extended family and so many friends and neighbors that are here today who are also my extended family. We have a close-knit neighborhood which I am very lucky to live in, so thank you. My friends from my district and beyond, thank you for your constant support.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank Dave Hodell and Jeremy Solomon from MassBay Community College; one of the gems in my district, thank you so much for being here, as well; and the family of my cousin Rabbi Joseph Meszler as you all heard. It's great to have them here and to celebrate; I don't have too many cousins in Massachusetts so it's really special for me for them to be here.

And I'd like to acknowledge and thank our special guest Senator Ed Markey for being here so much as well and thank you for all that you do.

Thank you, Senator DiDomenico, for your kind words and for the countless hours you have dedicated to helping the residents of your district and the Commonwealth – your work to uplift the most vulnerable among us, especially children, is outstanding, and the Senate is truly lucky to have you on our team

Thank you to Senator Edwards, for your kind words as well - your service to this body and to our country is invaluable, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of the residents of your district and the Commonwealth

I'd also like to thank my friend and colleague, the Minority Leader, Bruce Tarr for all your work on behalf of this great state and, most importantly, your thoughtful partnership and friendship

I'd also like to thank my cousin, Rabbi Joseph Meszler, for his beautiful convocation this morning

Years ago, I told the story of my grandfather, Joseph Goldstein, who escaped political and religious violence in Russia to come to America – where his family was able to thrive and write our own American story...

Rabbi Meszler is named after my grandfather, a living reminder of the sacrifice he made to create safety and possibility for our family in this great country. I'd like to welcome the dignitaries and guests joining us today and congratulate our newest members, Senators Driscoll, Fernandes, and Dooner

We all look forward to you bringing your experience and unique perspectives to our work here

And, of course, I would like to thank the Clerk and his team, Senate Counsel and his team, our court officers and the entire staff of the Senate for your dedication to this body

And thank you, the members, for your service

Standing before you today – on the very first day of a New Year and the very first day of a new legislative session - our 194th General Court I can't help but be humbled at all we have accomplished together during my time as Senate President.

When I stood before you after first being elected President in 2018, I spoke about the importance of ensuring fairness in education funding. And I'm proud to say that the Student Opportunity Act was signed into law in 2019, and we have upheld our commitment to fully fund it ever since

That day in 2018, I also told the story of my father, a World War II veteran who helped liberate the camps at Buchenwald, and the toll his untreated mental illness took on our family. And I'm proud to say that our landmark, first-in-the-nation comprehensive mental health care reform bill, which puts behavioral health treatment on par with physical health treatment, was signed into law in 2022

I also spoke about the importance of listening to residents like El, my

constituent, about acknowledging people for who they are on government documents and I'm proud to say that, as of July 2024, you can now designate "X" as well as "M" or "F" for gender on a birth certificate or an application for a driver's license, learner's permit or identification card

In 2023, I laid out a vision for a Student Opportunity PLAN, to ensure that EVERY Massachusetts resident had access to educational opportunities from cradle to career. And I am beyond proud to say that we made community college FREE for ALL through MassEducate, and significantly reformed early education and care to increase access and affordability while paying early educators more.

Also last session, I said that "the third time's a charm" for finally lowering the cost of prescription drugs and I'm proud to say that a bill to do just that has been sent to the Governor this week, along with important market reforms to our health care system.

In fact, just this week, the Senate wrapped up what I consider to be a historically productive legislative session which consistently delivered on our promise to make the Commonwealth more affordable, competitive and equitable

When it comes to affordability, not only did we lower the cost of medications, we:

- made community college free,
- provided breakfast and lunch to every K-12 student in our public schools, saving families \$1200 per child per year,
- put reforms in place to start lowering the cost of child care, created a framework to bring the high cost of housing down,
- made bus service free,
- funded low-income MBTA fares,
- and passed the most comprehensive tax relief package in a generation, which doubled the senior circuit breaker tax credit, increased the earned income credit for working families, and provided the largest universal child tax credit in the country

To make Massachusetts more competitive, we:

- Made significant investments in life sciences, climate tech, AI and cybersecurity, clean energy and small businesses,
- expanded educational opportunities for all of our residents,
- raised the salaries of early educators,
- and addressed systemic health care challenges to help keep costs for businesses and municipalities down
- all while staying true to the values we hold dear here

And in our continued work toward equity, we:

- passed tuition equity,
- strengthened access to physical and mental health care for pregnant people and new parents,
- extended the full rights of parentage to LGBTQ+ families and families created via assisted reproduction,

- opened up economic opportunity for business owners by creating new liquor licenses in the City of Boston,
- and enshrined protections for LGBTQ+ veterans and those living in long-term care facilities

We also made important changes to our long-term care and assisted living sectors, passed a wide-ranging climate bill that will allow us to power up our clean energy future, and increased benefits and modernized services and recognition for our veterans and their families and these are just some the initiatives that made it to the Governor's desk.

I could go on and on about the work that we have accomplished, but I'm sure you'd all like to have dinner with your families tonight!

There is something I would like to say, however, about how all of this good work was done - and that's by all of us working together. As Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." or, if you prefer a sports analogy, look to the words of Michael Jordan: "Talent wins games, but teamwork wins championships."

As we think about the work ahead of us this session, the people of Massachusetts will be looking to us to champion issues important to them, collaborate to find solutions, and compromise to put those solutions into practice

I can't think of anything more important, especially now. It is clear from the results of the last national election that people are hurting. They are being squeezed by economic realities that feel beyond their control and they have lost trust in so many of our institutions – including the people they elect to represent them.

But, here in Massachusetts, we will not give in to despair - or amplify the chaos we see at the national level. We will continue to focus on our fundamentals – access to quality education at every level, a commitment to innovation, and our responsibility to expand access to justice and uphold civil rights – while fighting to lower costs and increase opportunities for every single resident

Because, what worries me most about attention-seeking politicians is not only the damage they will do to our institutions – although that is a grave concern, it is also that the chaos, attention seeking, disregard for the Constitution and constant sowing of division will take our attention off the important work of fighting for our residents.

Because, at the end of the day – or the end of a legislative session – what is left is the work. And, for me, the work is the fight. The fight for lower costs, more affordable homes, an economy that works for everyone, and a belief that Massachusetts can safely be called home by everyone who wants to live, work, raise a family and start a business here

Right now, we are at an inflection point – both as a country and as a Commonwealth. It is a critical time for us to prove to people that government is, in fact, working for them. And that we really are working together as a team.

So, this session, I'm taking the words of one of my personal heroes, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to heart. She said, "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." That is our challenge this session - to partner with the people we serve, to build that Commonwealth that works for everyone

To that end, I propose that the Senate engage in a statewide listening tour. Our media landscape is fractured and distorted by algorithms designed to deliver profit to powerful companies. And so, to ensure that we are focusing on what's vital while delivering news about the work we are doing, we must engage directly with those

important to us – our constituents.

I'm proud to say we have a lot of good news to share but we also have significant work ahead of us - and so I'd like to dig into both.

When I think back to the day that we announced the MassEducate program last May, I remember distinctly the words of one of the students who joined us that day

Jose Cervantes – who was just two years old when he came to Massachusetts – lives in Lowell and has worked as a mason for two decades while supporting his teenage daughter Charlie. Jose and Charlie are our guests today in the Chamber. Thank you for joining us, we are proud of both of you, you represent the best of Massachusetts.

When he was asked to participate in the MassEducate launch event, Jose worked late the night before so he could be there without taking a hit to his paycheck. That's how important he felt it was to spread the word about free community college – a resource he looks forward to passing on to Charlie when she is ready

Speaking about his time at Northern Essex Community College, he said, “The word community in community college is so underrated, because when you walk in there, that's what it feels like.”

I can't think of a better way to explain how absolutely vital these institutions are to creating community while promoting positive economic outcomes – both for the students they serve and the state

As Jonathan K. Jefferson, the President of Roxbury Community College said, MassEducate “sets a firm foundation for ensuring that all residents can aspire to economic growth.”

That's why we will continue to support MassEducate as well as the wraparound services our SUCCESS programs provide and continue to work with our community colleges to ensure that faculty and staff have the resources and support they require

We will also continue our commitment to our state universities and our UMASS system – to ensure they can support the students who may choose a four year degree after completing community college, while continuing to be a wonderful option for traditional four year students

Because of this Chamber's vision and persistence, right now, all Pell-eligible residents are able to go to our four year colleges tuition and fee free and families with incomes under one hundred thousand dollars have those costs cut in half.

This is an incredible commitment to public higher education, but we can't stop now. This session we must go further to help make college more affordable for more middle and lower income Massachusetts families.

At the K-12 level we have maintained our commitment to the Student Opportunity Act, providing record levels of funding to our public schools

But it has been some time since we closely examined some aspects of K-12 funding and policy, and so I hope to tackle that this session

And, I'd also like for the Senate to turn its spotlight on Career and Technical Education – to celebrate its achievements and learn what it can teach us about putting high school students on a path towards lifelong success

Research has shown that students that participate in Career and Tech Ed have the potential to reach higher earnings after graduation in fields such as construction – and even have better degree completion rates in fields like healthcare if they do go to college

In a Commonwealth where we need all hands on deck in fields like clean energy, life sciences, animal care, hospitality and health care, we need Career and Tech Ed more than ever...

And that is why, when it comes time for us to spend from our one-time Fair

Share infrastructure fund, I am challenging us to commit more than \$100M toward expanding Career and Tech Ed capacity.

Finally, we cannot speak about our educational success without focusing on the crucial ages of birth through five years old - those children served by our early education and care providers

Last session, we invested an historic \$1.5 billion in this sector, but there is still work to be done.

The Senate will maintain its commitment to shoring up our early ed and care system through investments and continued policy reforms...

...because wouldn't it be great if we could get to the eventual goal of ensuring that all parents and caregivers pay no more than seven per cent of their salary for care?

Increasing educational opportunities at every level will be the single most important thing we continue do to fight for a Commonwealth that opens doors of opportunity while keeping costs down and I thank you all for your continued commitment to this cause.

Another area where the Senate continues to show leadership is in increasing access to quality health care.

The past few years have been difficult for patients and providers alike.

With well documented failures caused by the introduction of private equity into our health care ecosystem, both here and throughout the country – and we are still trying to understand its full impact

“The Gilded Age of Medicine is Here,” declared a recent article by the New Yorker Magazine, with our own Steward Health meltdown used as the example to illustrate this point

While it is vital that we continue to study the impact of private equity, the market oversight law passed this week puts important guardrails in place to help prevent another crisis like Steward

Ultimately, just as healthcare should be a conversation between a patient and provider without government getting in the way, we should also be free from the influence of private companies as we make the decisions that are best for our health and well-being.

As a leader of healthcare reform for over 20 years, it's time for Massachusetts to put the patient and provider back at the center of our healthcare ecosystem, and the Senate looks forward to taking action to make that happen by looking at comprehensive healthcare reform, including taking a close look at primary care delivery

Finally, the Senate has championed lowering the cost of necessary medications for years, and I am proud to say that the recent bill sent to the Governor on prescription drugs will save thousands of dollars for residents, especially those living with chronic conditions.

I guess a third time really was a charm!

As we move into the new session, we are mindful that two pain points continue to color the experiences of the people who call Massachusetts home –

The high cost of housing and the problem of congestion, traffic and uneven access to reliable public transportation

By working together, the Senate, House and Healey Administration made big strides towards addressing housing availability and affordability through the Affordable Homes Act.

We have stood up for the MBTA Communities Act, unlocked the potential of accessory dwelling units, provided eviction protections, and increased state funding

for market rate and affordable units.

...but residents are still considering cheaper states to live in as they wait for the results of that wide-ranging bill to become reality

In the meantime, in the spirit of putting our ears to the ground and understanding the factors prohibiting our residents from finding housing they can afford, I will ask the Senate Housing Committee Chair and members to go out into our communities and speak with people and experts about our housing challenges, and report their findings back to me after one hundred days

The Senate will also try again to shift the burden of brokers' fees from renters, and look at other ways to cut unnecessary costs for renters and homeowners alike

When it comes to transportation, the Senate will continue to support the MBTA, the commuter rail, and RTAs across the state, so that residents can get out of their cars and into public transportation that is affordable and reliable...

...and we will continue to support building up our EV adoption so that we can reach our climate goals

Because, in Massachusetts, we can cut costs for residents while creating opportunities for a greener future

Speaking of our future, there is one area where I feel strongly that we must create a brighter one. That's why I am once again calling on the Senate and House to pass meaningful legislation to address raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction—or Raise The Age as it is most commonly called—to include the age of 18, or what is typically a student's last year of high school.

I'm proud of the progress we made last session in bringing awareness to this important issue, working together with the Celtics, Citizens for Juvenile Justice and other advocates and stakeholders

Everyone here knows how easy it is to make mistakes in our youth – we've all been there.

Most kids will make a mistake—or ten—in their lifetimes.

For many of us, those mistakes didn't stop us from having the chance to fall in love, start and nurture a family, take out a loan for an education, buy a house or car, or develop a calling and a career that we love.

It is unjust that some young people—by virtue of geography, race, ethnicity or family background—will be robbed of opportunities to create a life full of meaning and happiness because of an early entanglement with the criminal legal system.

Massachusetts will never reach its full economic potential without ensuring that we engage everyone in opportunities to learn, work and succeed...

...and we will never achieve racial equity in Massachusetts without addressing the systemic biases and injustices in our systems, including our criminal legal system—and giving our children a fair shot at life...

It is time once again to build on this movement and follow the large body of supporting evidence that keeping children and young adults away from incarceration provides better outcomes for all of us

Today, I have barely scratched the surface of the many policy wins we accomplished last session, while laying out some of what more needs to be done

Yet these accomplishments are consistently overshadowed by a persistent negative media narrative

Contrary to what these news outlets may print, the Senate is in fact eager to have the public informed about the work we do—and to have public involvement.

We:

- broadcast all of our sessions – both formal and informal,
- hold hybrid public hearings,
- invite the public to learn more about the Legislature through our Citizens’ Legislative Seminars two times a year,
- use numerous channels to communicate about our work,
- and meet our constituents in our districts to hear from them on the issues they care about.

But in an age when local news has been obliterated, state and local stories get bypassed in favor of national ones, and the major outlets we have here in Massachusetts choose to report more on personalities than policy, we can understand how frustrating it can be to try to get a handle on what is happening at the State House.

That’s why the I am committing to a series of changes that will build upon the Senate’s commitment to an open and transparent process of legislating

The Senate has long ensured that all votes of Senate committees are made public, but this session, I am committing to making all Senate votes in joint committees public as well

...and I’m calling on our partners in the House to do the same

In addition, our Senate rules require that Senate committees make testimony public and I’m calling on us to make all testimony, either from Senate or Joint committees, public as well.

I am also committing today to posting all summaries of bills that come out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. While sometimes these summaries are dense, they include important information about the bills coming to the Senate floor for a vote.

In decades past anyone could walk into the Clerk’s office or the Senate Ways and Means office and get documents in hand. You can still do that today – but we must recognize that most people access information digitally now, and our digital offerings need to be easily accessible and digestible.

That’s why my team has worked with LIS to create a digital press room on the Senate website, and will continue to work with LIS and the Clerk’s office to enhance our digital presence.

I also propose formalizing what we did at the end of last session – which allowed us to complete vital work - and allow conference committee votes to continue thorough the full two year session. The bills that emerge from conference committees contain provisions that have been vetted by one or both branches and have been reported upon – sometimes extensively.

And speaking of conference committees, I am going to ask negotiators on conference committees to work towards more openness in committee meetings, starting with working to ensure the first meeting is open.

And, finally, I propose that we move up the deadline for reporting bills out of committees from the second year to the first year of the session. Doing so will allow us to keep a steadier pace of vetting, debating and passing bills before the end of formal session gridlock.

When I look back on my years of Senate President, I am amazed at all we have accomplished together. Not only have we made concrete changes that will lower costs for residents while expanding opportunities for all of us.

We have increased representation in this Chamber through installing a portrait of Abigail Adams in our lobby, unveiling our new bust of Frederick Douglass, and – soon – through the selection of a woman to be represented in our Chamber by our Senate Art Committee.

We’ve done this, even with the disruption of a global pandemic – during which we showed the rest of America just how important effective, responsive, collaborative, reality-based bipartisan government can be.

This work isn’t easy, I know. But true leadership never is.

To quote a philanthropist and American legend, Dolly Parton, “If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, then you are an excellent leader.”

I’m excited to work with you to inspire the people of Massachusetts to dream more, learn more, do more and become more.

And so, once again, I thank you for your vote, and for the trust you have again placed in me as your Senate President.

I encourage you to enjoy this day and celebrate your great achievement with your friends and family...

...And then let’s get to work – and let’s fight (like hell) for the people of this great Commonwealth.

Thank you.

Mr. Tarr asked unanimous consent to make a statement; and, there being no objection, he addressed the Senate as follows:

Committee of the House.

The President welcomed a committee of the House of Representatives that arrived to declare that the House of Representatives is now assembled and ready to proceed to business and that the House had chosen Ronald A. Mariano of Quincy as Speaker, Bradley Jones of North Reading as Minority Leader and Timothy Carroll of Hull as Clerk.

Organization of the House of Representatives.

Orders Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Rodrigues,--

Ordered, That the joint rules observed in the preceding General Court (2023-2024) be observed as the temporary joint rules of the two branches for the present General Court until the adoption of permanent joint rules.

Temporary Joint Rules.

On motion of Mr. DiDomenico,--

Ordered, That a convention of the two Houses be held at a quarter before twelve o’clock noon, on Thursday, January 5, for the purpose of administering the oaths of office to the several Councillors-elect.

Joint convention of the two branches.

Remarks of Senate Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr.

Thank you, Madame President, and Good Afternoon.

A warm welcome to all of the Senators returning today, and particularly new Senators Kelly Dooner, William Driscoll and Dylan Fernandes.

Thank you, Senators Durant and Dooner for nominating me.

Thank you to the GOP Caucus for placing trust and confidence in me.

Thank you, voters of the 19 communities in the First Essex and Middlesex district for giving me the honor of serving with all of you once again.

Remarks of Senate Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr

I am encouraged that my vote total today increased by a whopping 66 per cent from the last election for Senate President, but alas, it was not enough.

Congratulations on your re-election to lead the Massachusetts Senate, and thanks for the years of leadership you have already provided to this remarkable, dynamic, and historic legislative body.

And thank you for your partnership and friendship as we continue to work together to defy the ongoing and disturbing trends of division and paralysis that are plaguing other legislative bodies, even as we face challenges, circumstances, and situations that demand the very best each of us has to offer on behalf of those we represent.

James Madison said, " In republics, the great danger is that the majority may not sufficiently respect the rights of the minority."

My ancestor Jabez Tarr is said to be the youngest person from Cape Ann to fight at the Battle of Bunker Hill, which by the way, will be re-enacted at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester on June 21 and June 22nd (you're all invited).

In this book, which chronicles the adventures of his life, speaks to the intimidating scene he saw on the day of the battle. Standing in the earthworks that had been dug in the days and nights before, he saw legions of British troops advancing toward the modest band of revolutionaries girding to fend them off.

I must admit-there are days in the Senate when I could relate to that feeling-one recent budget debate about the 3A housing law.

But here in the Massachusetts Senate, we have a valued tradition of respect for the rights of the minority, and it will surely serve us as well in the future as it has in the past. We do not take it for granted, and those of us who populate minority arc deeply appreciate that respect.

In turn, we realize that it comes with an obligation, characterized by Nelson Rockefeller when he said " A responsible patriotism does not deny- but does demand- a responsible partisanship. For the way a party speaks, and acts can- and should- inspire the way a nation speaks and acts." Lofty aspirations indeed, but aspirations worthy of a body of a body that has such potential to continue setting a shining example from Beacon Hill for turbulent times in a divided nation.

Our obligation is often manifested in the sometimes lonely tasks of asking the questions, ensuring compliance with the rules we collectively agree to, staying up all night building props and charts before a debate, and offering our honest views and beliefs even when they are not popular in this chamber, just as all of you may feel particularly burdened explaining the need for multiple extension orders !

Now, with the tested and proven Senators O'Connor, Fattman, and Durant, and the welcome addition of Senator Dooner, we will continue to embrace those tasks because to do less would be a disservice to our common purposes.

And yet, our responsibilities to the Senate and our Commonwealth extend far beyond the fundamental tasks of which I have spoken. And in pursuing them we seek to capture the unlimited potential that lies before us as we gather for this inauguration day for the 194th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the words of Dr Martin Luther King, offered in a different context but every bit as relevant here - " Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better."

It is indisputable that by putting our honestly held beliefs, views, and ideas on the collective table in this chamber, we set the stage, with YOU, for something better than it would otherwise be.

Time and again, from funding shared priorities to supporting our school districts

and our municipal partners, we have proven it to be true. Now, with clouds of economic uncertainty and political turbulence gathering, we must rekindle and engage not only our ability to respectfully exchange differing opinions, but also to find what else where is all too rare a commodity - common ground.

Clearly there are issues where we can and must make progress together:

1. The Senate has long strongly held the collective principle of transparency - for instance, we worked together to achieve the posting of Senate committee votes on the web. Now, we must recommit to exploring measures that will even greater transparency, from posting joint committee votes to providing members and the public with more time to read and digest the matters that are before us.

2. Increasing the efficiency of the legislative process. We can do better than all-night sessions and complex matters that languish until after the time formal sessions have concluded. We know you share that vision.

3. Increasing our state's competitiveness to stem and overcome the tide of the tens of thousands of residents who have left the state in recent years because they couldn't afford to stay. We have already worked together to pass one of the largest tax reduction packages in our state's history - now we need to build on that action.

4. We have worked together to pass a major economic development bill, but there is much more to do to create the type of environment that recruits and retains employers with costs that don't crush their chances for success and sustainability. This is imperative if we are to have the future revenue to support our spending priorities.

5. Developing, transmitting, and distributing supplies of clean energy that our businesses and families can afford without destabilizing household budgets

6. Prioritizing our existing obligations with the resources we have - fair and adequate Chapter 70 funding for EVERY school district in the commonwealth, full funding for regional school transportation, and increased support for the substantial and often unpredictable costs of special education

7. Confronting the state's housing crisis not by vilifying communities, but by partnering with them to address what they need to build housing across the Commonwealth.

8. Addressing the unsustainable shelter and other costs of the migrant crisis.

9. Continuing to build a work force for the future, in such critical areas as health care

10. Strengthening our stewardship of natural resources such as forested lands and marshes for carbon sequestration, and watersheds for stream flows and drinking water.

Surely there are other areas for us to confront as well, and surely every member of this Senate has priorities. We are eager to hear them.

And there will also surely be the situations, challenges, and issues that will arise tomorrow that we can't see today. They will demand of us timely and collaborative responses, and we are committed to confronting them with you.

We welcome you to come to Minority Arc - even though it has grown by an astounding 66% since we last gathered for an inauguration, there is always room for you to come by and share your perspectives.

Because in the end, to paraphrase Aristotle, " The good of people must be the end of the science of politics ". That good is in our hands, may we be worthy of it.

On behalf of Senator O' Connor, Senator Fattman, Senator Durant, and Senator Dooner - We look forward to moving Massachusetts ahead in the days that lie before us. Let's go, and Happy New Year to all of you and your families!

On motion of Mr. Brady, all the above addresses were ordered printed in the Journal of the Senate.

Ordered printed.

Election of Clerk.

Mr. Collins moved that the Senate proceed to the election of a Clerk and that the President cast one ballot for Michael D. Hurley of South Boston as Clerk of the Senate; and this motion prevailed.

Clerk election.

Accordingly, after remarks, the ballot was cast and Mr. Hurley was declared elected, and was then qualified by taking the oaths and affirmation as prescribed by the Constitution and also the following oath, which was administered by the President:

“Whereas, you MICHAEL D. HURLEY, are chosen Clerk of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you do swear that you will truly enter all the votes and orders thereof, and in all things relating to your office that you will act faithfully and impartially accordingly to your best skill and judgement. So help you, God.”

Swearing in of Senate Counsel.

The President announced that she has appointed James DiTullio of Arlington as Senate Counsel. Mr. DiTullio was escorted to the Rostrum by Ms. Friedman of Arlington where he took and subscribed the oaths of office required by the Constitution and a law of the United States to qualify him for the discharge of his duties as Senate Counsel.

Senate Counsel appointment.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Ms. Jehlen,--

Ordered, That a committee be appointed to notify Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, Her Honor Kim Driscoll, Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth and the Honorable Council of the organization of the Senate; and that the Honorable Karen E. Spilka of Middlesex and Norfolk had been elected President of the Senate, and Michael D. Hurley of South Boston had been elected Clerk of the Senate.

Governor,-- organization of the Senate.

Senators Cyr of the Cape and Islands, Rausch of Norfolk, Worcester and Middlesex, Lewis of Fifth Middlesex, Gomez and Hampden, Fernandes of Plymouth and Barnstable and Dooner of Third Bristol and Plymouth were appointed the committee.

Subsequently, Mr. Cyr, for the committee reported that the committee had performed the duties assigned to it. The report was accepted and the committee was discharged.

Communications.

The following communication was received and placed on file, to wit:

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

January 1, 2025

Senator Ryan C. Fattman.

Michael D. Hurley,
Clerk of the Senate
State House, Room 335
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Clerk:

As the Chair of the Republican party Caucus, I wish to inform you that the caucus has unanimously appointed Bruce E. Tarr of First Essex and Middlesex District as the Minority Leader in the Senate for the 2025-2026 legislative session.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Ryan C. Fattman
State Senator

Orders Adopted.

On motion of Ms. Brownsberger,--

Ordered, That the Senate Rules of the last session be observed as the temporary Senate Rules for the present General Court.

Temporary
Senate Rules.

On motion of Mr. Eldridge,--

Ordered, That the Clerk begin the daily printing of the Journal of the Senate, as authorized by Senate Rule 6, and that the daily reading thereof be dispensed with; that, under authority of Section 22A of Chapter 3 of the General Laws, copies of the Journals of the entire session be printed and bound with the customary appendices and an index; and that a certified copy thereof be deposited with the Secretary of the Commonwealth as the official bound Journal of the Senate.

Daily printing of the
Journal.

On motion of Mr. Driscoll,--

Ordered, That when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again tomorrow at a half past eleven o'clock A.M.

Time of meeting.

Moment of Silence.

At the request of the Chair (Mr. Collins), the members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence and reflection to the memory of Mary J. Hurley.

Moment of silence.

Adjournment in Memory of Mary J. Hurley.

The Senator from Suffolk, Mr. Collins, moved that when the Senate adjourns today, it do so in memory of Mary J. Hurley of South Boston.

Mary J. Hurley of South Boston passed away peacefully on January 12, 2024. She was 94.

Mary was born on December 30, 1929 to Cliff and Bridget Swain. She was one of six children growing up in South Boston.

Mary is also survived by her daughter Jean Carter and her husband Paul, Denise Carr and her husband William, Mia Gallagher and her husband Michael, Diane Wolski and her husband Dan and her son, Clerk of the Senate, Michael D. Hurley.

Mary always knew how to make people feel special and never held back her love. Devoted to her large family, she found tremendous joy in cooking for her family, celebrating birthdays and making others smile with a great sense of humor.

Mary is predeceased by her daughter Michelle Hurley.

Additionally, she will be missed by her 29 cherished grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

Accordingly, as a mark of respect to the memory of Mary J. Hurley, at sixteen minutes past two o'clock P.M., on motion of Mr. Driscoll, the Senate adjourned to meet again on Thursday next at half past eleven o'clock A.M.