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INSIDERNJ POLICY MAKERS 2024

Campaign politics overshadowed the budget season this year, as Tammy Murphy supplanted Phil Murphy in the statewide public eye. In the end, Phil Murphy's budget quietly survived, while Tammy Murphy's U.S. Senate candidacy infamously died.

This list usually prioritizes the Trenton-based brainiacs who try to find a way to try to spin out of control spending into an argument for how the public benefits. This year, however, the corruption meltdown of U.S. Senator Bob Menendez created a federal office opening, and the ensuing debate immersed New Jersey's political intelligentsia in campaigns and elections law.

You'll recall, of course, that U.S. Rep. Andy Kim (D-3) – long the

beneficiary of ballot bracketing as an establishment Democrat – decided (in his own best interest, but that's politics, folks) in the most morally indignant fashion, that “the party line” punishes the democratic aspirations of most New Jerseyans. So even as Governor Murphy primed the establishment to accept and crown his wife as the next U.S. Senator from New Jersey to supplant the fetid political corpse of Menendez, Kim launched his insurrection.

The Murphys tacitly relied on the strength of the governor's position as the chief overseer of the budget, and the appetites of key county leaders, hopeful for a budget beneficial to their self-interests. The Murphys' simple, unspoken calculation required county party to support Tammy Murphy's senate

candidacy by bracketing her as the organization choice on the June ballot, in exchange for goodies (that's an old Joe DiVincenzo term) in the budget.

Kim had other plans. From the Associated Press on Feb. 26th, 2024: "New Jersey's primary ballot design unconstitutionally favors candidates who have the support of political party leaders and should be scrapped, U.S. Rep. Andy Kim, who's locked in a primary contest for U.S. Senate against the state's first lady Tammy Murphy, said in a federal lawsuit filed Monday. The suit seeks to upend New Jersey's unique primary ballot system in which candidates backed by political party leaders appear grouped together on the ballot, with challengers in separate columns, and takes aim at a system widely considered to be a crucial advantage in primary contests."

In the end, a judge sided with Kim, granting the preliminary injunction to eliminate the so-called county line, thereby essentially removing the ballot design teeth from the mouths of 19 of the 21 county party chairs in New Jersey. Tammy Murphy pulled the plug on her campaign, but the budget season endured.

Last month, on time and with little fanfare, Governor Murphy signed the record-biggest New Jersey budget in state history, totaling \$56 billion, spending \$2.1 billion more than it takes in, while fully funding the state's pension and school funding.

From The New Jersey Monitor:

"We can go back and forth and talk about what's

in the budget, and I think all of us have agreed this budget is not perfect, but there's a lot of good in here," said Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin (D-Essex), the chamber's budget chair.

"The bill cleared the Assembly in a 55-22 vote. Assembly members Don Guardian (R-Atlantic), Claire Swift (R-Atlantic), and Sean Kean (R-Monmouth) crossed party lines to back the bill. The Senate approved the bill in a 27-13 vote. Sens. Vince Polistina (R-Atlantic) and Bob Singer (R-Ocean) were the only Republicans to vote in its favor."

Along the way, the usual policymakers in both parties had their say, pro and con, inspired and astonished, admired (well, at least respected) and barely tarnished. The state's political chattering classes were still talking about Andy Kim, now facing a credible Republican challenger in businessman Curtis Bashaw. At their splendid Middletown home, the Murphys held a scheduled fundraiser for a debate rattled and party-embattled President Joe Biden amid muttered speculation about a cabinet position landing for the First Lady. But beyond a fast-developing, fascinating national election, New Jerseyans continued to contemplate the longer-range implications of the line change. As for the Murphys, with Joe Biden gone now as a presidential prospect, to paraphrase Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, they'll always have Harris.



Max Pizarro
Editor-in-Chief



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1

ANDY KIM

U.S. CONGRESSMAN, DISTRICT 3,
DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR U.S. SENATE



When U.S. District Judge Zahid Quraishi (see below) eliminated the so-called county line in the Democratic Primary and undercut New Jersey bosses' influence, he gave the most significant political – and policy – win of the season to the congressman, a 2024 candidate for the United States Senate. Why isn't Quraishi number one on this list and Kim number 2? The judge wouldn't have had that case on his desk without Kim filing the lawsuit, and the congressman demonstrated significant momentum already early in the primary process.

2

ZAHID N. QURAIISHI

DISTRICT JUDGE, UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY



Scrapping bracketing in favor of block ballot construction, the judge in his decision made clear his understanding of the magnitude of his decision. “The integrity of the democratic process for a primary election is at stake and the remedy Plaintiffs are seeking is extraordinary,” wrote Quraishi. “Mandatory injunctive relief is reserved only for the most unusual cases. Plaintiffs’ burden on this Motion is therefore particularly heavy. Nevertheless, the Court finds, based on this record, that Plaintiffs have met their burden and that this is the rare instance when mandatory relief is warranted.”



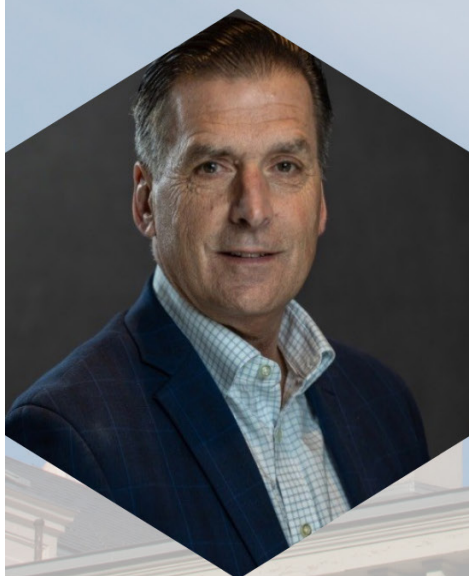
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3

MATT PLATKIN

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW JERSEY



When Platkin sent Judge Zahid N. Quraishi a letter ahead of the judge’s decision, notifying him that his office would not defend the three state statutes that prescribe how New Jersey designs its primary ballots, the attorney general signaled his willingness to play a vocal role in the developing policy debate regarding the efficacy of New Jersey’s primary ballot system. “The challenged statutes are unconstitutional,” Platkin wrote, “therefore the state has no interest in defending the county line.” His letter came as sources anticipated Quraishi imminently ruling against the line in *Kim et al. v. Hanlon*, a lawsuit filed by Kim, questioning the justice of New Jersey’s county party line ballot system. Platkin’s letter carried the added weight of an upper echelon member of the Murphy Administration opposing the establishment process in place, even as Governor Phil Murphy’s wife, First Lady Tammy Murphy, ran against Kim in the Democratic Primary for the United States Senate.

4

TAMMY MURPHY

FIRST LADY, THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY



Okay, so maybe she's an unwitting occupant of this list, in the sense that she did not contribute a policy perspective to the debate, other than to vaguely support the status quo. But her candidacy in the aftermath of Menendez's gold bar nosedive showed the extent to which the party apparatus had drifted from a hardnosed ground game in touch with real voters. That's a significant contribution.

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5

STEVE ADUBATO, JR.

STATE OF AFFAIRS HOST



The veteran, award-winning television journalist – a former Assemblyman from Essex County – thrives on creating a public forum for policy substance. Pay attention. We won't have someone like him ever again. A Newark native, Adubato thrives on the granular details of policy, and features guests from all over the state discussing in detail the issues pertinent to their disciplines and challenges.

6

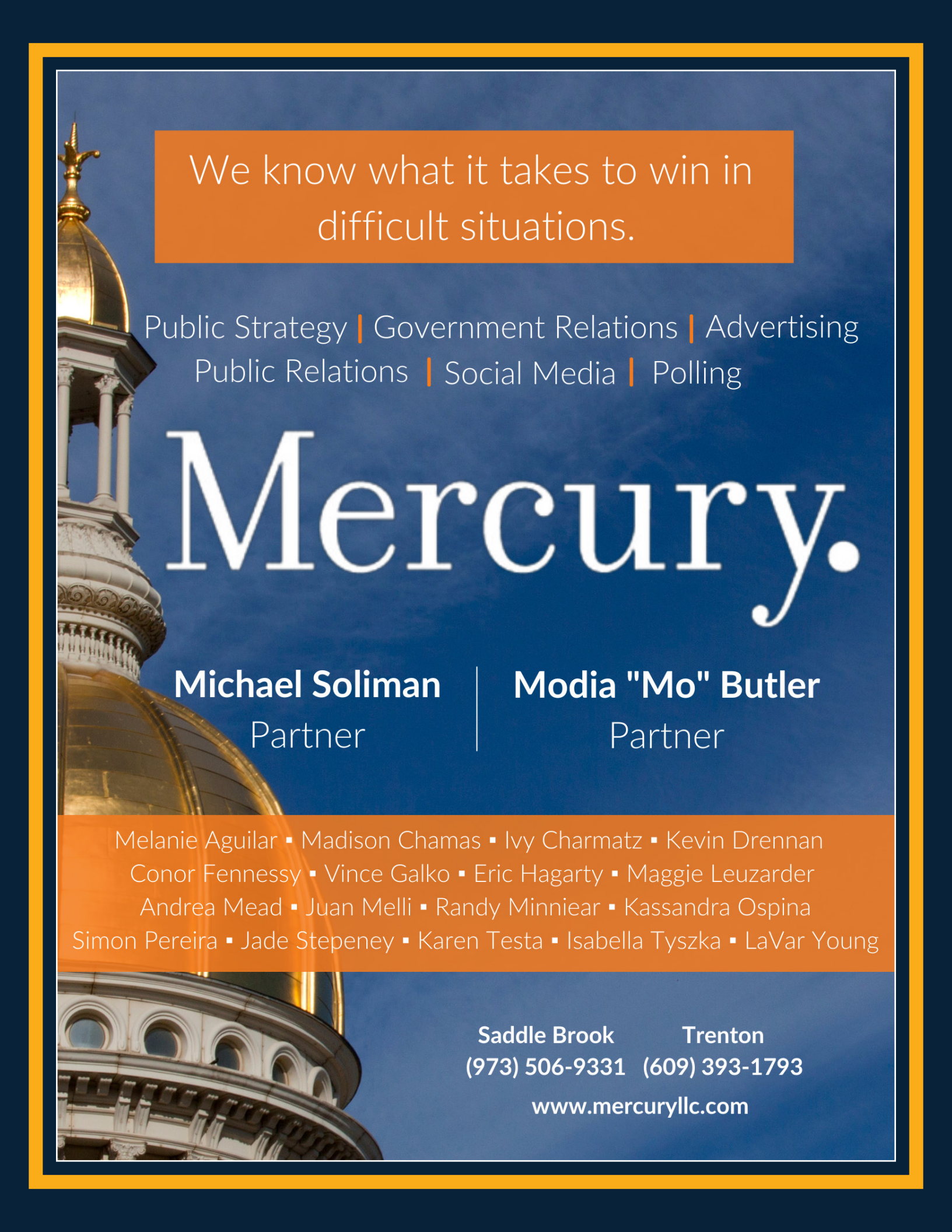
BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

CONGRESSWOMAN, CD12



Veteran progressive lawmaker Bonnie Watson Coleman this year proved vital in gaining information from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding the disparate impact of eviction on Black renters, women, and children - three classes protected by the Fair Housing Act. Each year, the congresswoman noted, 2.9 million children are affected by an eviction, or one child every ten seconds. Eviction rates during childhood are higher than at any other age. While Black Americans only make up 18.6% of all renters in the United States, over half (51.1%) of those affected by eviction are Black. Additionally,

those who have been evicted for any reason regularly find it harder to secure safe housing in the future. “Despite the incredible strides our nation has made since the Fair Housing Act was signed into law in 1968,” read the letter sent by Watson-Coleman and her colleagues, “there are still grave injustices – particularly concerning equitable access to affordable, safe, and stable housing.” According to the Sentencing Project, as many as one in three adults in the United States — up to 100 million Americans — have interacted with the criminal justice system, a disproportionate amount of whom are people of color. A criminal record creates barriers to jobs, higher education opportunities, and public benefits – including those supplied by HUD.



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7

DIANA HOUENOU

CHAIR, NEW JERSEY CANNABIS REGULATORY COMMISSION

Appointed by Governor Murphy, Houenou works with other members of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission to regulate legalized cannabis. A former senior policy advisor and associate counsel for Murphy, fluent in French, Houenou advised the governor on policy and legislative issues concerning criminal justice, military and veterans, community affairs, and immigrants' rights.



8

SHIRLEY TILGHMAN

POLICY HEAVYWEIGHT

Co-Chair (with Merck CEO Kenneth Frazier) of Murphy's Restart and Recovery Commission. The former Princeton University President (2001-2013) teaches molecular biology and public policy at Princeton.



9

MARCIA MARLEY

BLUEWAVENJ PRESIDENT

Head of the state's progressive movement, Marley occupies a position on the New Jersey Policy Perspective Board of Trustees, and, critically, a seat on the revitalized Economic Development Authority (EDA), which needed some policy – and moral – authority after getting run into the ground during the Chris Christie years.



10

PARIMAL GARG

CHIEF COUNSEL, MURPHY ADMINISTRATION

When Platkin (see above) left the Murphy Administration two years ago, Garg stepped up to become the governor's new chief counsel. Formerly having clerked for state Supreme Court Justice Stuart Rabner, Garg received his B.A. from Georgetown University, magna cum laude, and J.D. from Harvard Law School, cum laude.





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11

DENNIS ZEVELOFF

DEPUTY CHIEF POLICY ADVISOR



Former Director of Budget and Outcomes for the Murphy Administration, where he coordinated the Governor's state and federal spending proposals and helped jumpstart numerous initiatives across departments, Zeveloff has a reputation as a critical thinker with legitimate economic chops. Zeveloff previously served as the Policy Coordinator for then Governor-elect Murphy's transition team and as Policy Advisor during then-candidate Murphy's gubernatorial campaign. He grew up in Bergen County and received his Bachelors of Arts Degree from Dartmouth College and Juris Doctor and Master of Business Administration Degrees from Yale University.

12

EVAN WEISS

CEO OF THE NEWARK ALLIANCE

Formerly in the Governor's Office as Murphy's go-to person on finance and Budgeting, Weiss in 2021 became head of the leading nonprofit dedicated to the ongoing economic revitalization of New Jersey's largest city.



13

CRAIG COUGHLIN

SPEAKER OF THE NEW JERSEY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Regular Middlesex guy Coughlin continues to bask in some Statehouse mumbling about a future gubernatorial win, partly on the strength of his successful StayNJ Plan, but also on the overall thrust of his middle-class economic issues focus, politically advantageous perch in a key county, and his lowkey ability to work amiably with all players.





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14

JON BRAMNICK

21ST DISTRICT STATE SENATOR, REPUBLICAN
CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR



A champion for two decades of civility in American government and politics, Bramnick plans to refine and reintroduce a 2005 bipartisan resolution of his that prioritizes civility in the Garden State. “The spirit of that resolution is as important as ever,” said Bramnick, against the backdrop of an assassination attempt of former President Donald Trump in Butler, PA, in an increasingly acrimonious national campaign cycle. “Let me be clear,” the senator added. “Debating our political differences makes us stronger. But that debate should never devolve into hateful rhetoric, treating opponents as enemies, or turning to violence.” Throughout his career, alike fighting the majority Democratic Party in Trenton, and the demonizing rhetoric and actions of Trump, Bramnick has consistently represented, even embodied, this belief.

15

NICK SCUTARI

SENATE PRESIDENT

A go-getter with a nimble policy mind, Scutari worked with Coughlin through another budget season to get the document packaged and passed ahead of schedule.



16

CHRISTINE HANLON

MONMOUTH COUNTY CLERK

The veteran clerk proved a strong advocate for the county line system in the face of Kim and his allies, ably representing clerks concerned about logistical challenges. Following Judge Quraishi's March decision on the bracketing question, Hanlon and her colleagues vowed to appeal. She will no doubt prove a key player in the months ahead as NJ lawmakers shape ballot policy for the state's future elections.





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17

KATE MCDONNELL

CHIEF COUNSEL TO THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL

The ultimate behind-the-scenes Trenton power player. Formerly Deputy Chief Counsel to Governor Murphy, McDonnell served as General Counsel to the Assembly Majority Office for eight years, subsequent to a tour as Associate General Counsel in the Majority Office. A Magna cum laude graduate from the University of Notre Dame, McDonnell holds both a J.D. from the Rutgers School of Law – Camden and a Master’s Degree from Rutgers – New Brunswick’s Bloustein School of Policy and Planning.



18

MICHELE SIEKERKA

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY BUSINESS
AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Siekerka’s organization serves the state’s private sector employee and business sector base. During the Murphy years, and especially during the COVID era, she effectively defined herself as a leading voice in opposition to those policies detrimental to the state’s business community.



19

LIZ MUOIO

TREASURER, NEW JERSEY

An LD15 assemblywoman from Pennington prior to going to the Murphy Administration, Muoio steered into port the historically gigantic, federal surplus-assisted \$56 billion budget for FY2025.

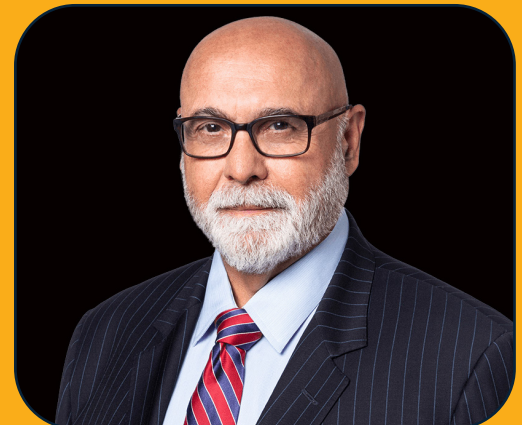


20

ANGELO GENOVA

CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING PARTNER,
GENOVABURNS

The state's foremost election law attorney, the veteran legal mind will continue to aggressively engage amid official ongoing examinations into elections integrity, both in New Jersey and nationally.





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21

MARK MAGYAR

DIRECTOR, STEVE SWEENEY CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES, ROWAN UNIVERSITY

The longtime Sweeney-affiliated policy nerd followed Sweeney out of the Statehouse to South Jersey, where he chairs the former senate president’s embryonic academic endeavor, as a cerebrating catalyst for the political comeback of Sweeney, now a 2025 gubernatorial contender.



22

JOHN REITMEYER

BUDGET REPORTER, NJ SPOTLIGHT

There’s no reason to look at the budget report or listen to “the experts,” as long as NJ Spotlight pays Reitmeyer to pour through the beast and write about it. In a word, the best.



23

KEN FRAZIER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF MERCK AND CO., INC.

Co-chair of Governor Phil Murphy's Restart and Recovery Commission, Frazier represents the real-world angle as a counterweight to the academic brain overload on the other side of the co-chairmanship.



24

JON DIMAIO

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN LEADER

Former Mayor of Hackettstown DiMaio has a strong understanding of budget issues and convictions on spending priorities as he works effectively across the aisle and with the members of the GOP caucus.



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25

TIM HILLMAN

CHIEF OF STAFF, GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

Upon the retirement from the administration of COS Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Hillman stepped up to take the job. Previously, he served as the Governor's Deputy Chief, and Director of Appointments. Prior to joining the Murphy Administration in 2019, Hillman spent nine years on the staff of the later disgraced Senator Bob Menendez, rising to the position of Deputy State Director.



26

JANE COHEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CLIMATE ACTION AND THE GREEN ECONOMY

Governor Phil Murphy's Maplewood-based Senior Policy Advisor has her roots in government, international affairs and human rights, with expert focal points in energy, environment and climate policy, international relations, and investigative research. Proficient in Mandarin Chinese and French – she also speaks the language of enviros, who are routinely understandably apoplectic.



27

ANDREW ZWICKER

SENATOR, LD-16

The Princeton University-based plasma physics department outreach director, Zwicker brings a technocratic core intelligence to his assignments aboard Budget and Appropriations, Higher Education, Labor, and Veterans Affairs.



28

GEORGE HELMY

FORMER COS, GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

Now serving as Chief External Affairs and Policy Officer for Barnabas Health, Helmy floated in the political atmosphere on the same week that Menendez announced his coming resignation from the U.S. Senate. His name invoked as a possible placeholder replacement for the belly-up senior senator alone, showed the high esteem in which the sitting governor holds him.



29

NICOLE RODRIGUEZ

NJ POLICY PERSPECTIVE PRESIDENT



The successor to Brandon McKoy, Rodriguez, formerly NJPP’s research director, has guided the think tank’s policy agenda and supervised its research staff since 2019. “I’m honored to take on the role of President of NJPP, an organization with a legacy of not only getting things done but doing so in a way that puts people first in the policy-making process,” Rodriguez, a Boston native and former star at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, said last year upon her elevation to the head job. “With democratic institutions and basic freedoms under attack in our nation’s halls of power, the need for community-driven policy has never been greater. We have a lot of work to do in building a state and economy that works for everyone, and I know that with this team we can get it done.”

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Institute's Ryan Haygood & Henal Patel on
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Ryan Haygood
Institute President & CEO



Henal Patel
Institute Law & Policy Director

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30

STEVEN PERSKIE

POLICY ADVISER TO MAYOR MARTY SMALL,
CITY OF ATLANTIC CITY

Elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in 1971 at age 26, and re-elected in 1973 and 1975, Democrat Perskie was the primary advocate and sponsor for the introduction of casino gaming in Atlantic City and was responsible for drafting what would become the New Jersey Casino Control Act. Perskie beat Republican Frederick Perone in the 1977 state senate race. In 1981, Perskie was again challenged in the general election by former Democratic Senator Joe McGahn, who ran as a Republican. Perskie won reelection with 29,151 votes, defeating McGahn, who received 28,149. Perskie was appointed an Atlantic County Superior Court Judge in 1982. In 1989, he resigned from the bench to manage James Florio's successful gubernatorial campaign. He served as Florio's Chief of Staff from 1989 to 1990. He was appointed Chairman of the New Jersey Casino Control Commission in 1990, where he served until 1994. During his tenure, Perskie oversaw a comprehensive restructuring of the agency.

31

SEAN MAROTTA

ATTORNEY

Now affiliated with the interests of the Middlesex County Democratic Organization, Marotta joined the Kim v. Hanlon case as a friend of the court, arguing the just principles behind New Jersey's line system challenged by Kim.



32

RYAN HAYGOOD

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE NEW JERSEY
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
(THE "INSTITUTE")

Haygood primarily concerns himself with policy that empowers at-risk urban communities. As such, he finds himself engaged 24-7, mostly against a political establishment primarily consumed with disempowering at-risk urban communities.



33

STACI BERGER

PRESIDENT OF HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

A real advocate, Berger assumed a frontline to save Affordable Housing Trust fund money for the last three years, She also radiates no fear when it comes to putting her name on a lawn sign, as she did when she ran for office in her home town of Piscataway. This year, she helped a pair of local allies get elected in a much-watched election.



34

TIM SULLIVAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NJEDA)

Sullivan comes from New York, where he served as Chief of Staff to the New York City Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, and where he'll probably return once his gig in this state is over.



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GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

35

PETER CHEN, ESQ.

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST AT NEW JERSEY
POLICY PERSPECTIVE



Chen serves as tax and budget lead, coordinating analysis of state and local fiscal policy. Expertise includes child and family policy advocacy in New Jersey since 2014. Most recently, according to NJPP, “he spearheaded New Jersey’s creation of a state-level Child Tax Credit. Peter’s work has included coordination of the statewide nonprofit Census complete count campaign, advocacy to strengthen state and local laws to protect children from lead exposure and reducing chronic absenteeism from school.” Previously Peter served as Policy Counsel for KIDS COUNT grantee Advocates for Children of New Jersey. Peter received his JD from Yale Law School and his Bachelors of Arts from Indiana University-Bloomington.

36

CECILIA ZALKIND

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER OF ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN
OF NEW JERSEY

Zalkind stands at the forefront of key policy advances in child welfare, early care and education and health care in New Jersey.



37

BILL PASCRELL III

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A partner at PPAG– Princeton Public Affairs Group in 1999, Pascrell has established himself as the state’s leading expert on all things related to the gaming industry.





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38

JEH JOHNSON

ATTORNEY, PAUL WEISS

The former Secretary of Homeland Security occupies a seat on Governor Murphy's Restart and Recovery Commission. An expert on counterterrorism; cybersecurity; border, port, aviation and maritime security; enforcement and administration of immigration laws; response to national disasters; detection and prevention of nuclear, chemical and biological threats; and the protection of critical infrastructure and the nation's leadership.



39

LISA JACKSON

VICE PRESIDENT OF ENVIRONMENT, POLICY AND SOCIAL INITIATIVES AT APPLE INC.

Another bigshot from the Obama Administration reanimated in Murphy World, Jackson served as administrator of the national Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and had a no-nonsense reputation as Jon Corzine's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner. Now she sits on Murphy's Restart and Recovery Commission.



40

AMY TORRES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE NEW JERSEY ALLIANCE FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

Torres played a critical advocacy role during 2020-21 redistricting by advocating for greater political representation for key communities of interest.



41

CHARLENE WALKER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAITH IN NEW JERSEY

Visible and energized, Walker has staked out ground on fair redistricting representation, anti-gun violence and same-day voting, among other progressive policy initiatives.



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DENNIS TRAINOR

CWA DISTRICT 1 VICE PRESIDENT

FRAN EHRET

CWA NJ AREA DIRECTOR

42

BILL MULLEN

BUILDING TRADES PRESIDENT

Head of the state's Building Trades, Mullen is not only a fierce labor advocate but an expert on labor issues. With Sweeney gone from Trenton, Mullen has animated a whole new strata of connections. With Sweeney as a statewide 2025 candidate for governor, look out.



43

DENNIS HART

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHEMISTRY
COUNCIL OF NJ

With over four decades of environmental policy experience, the former NJDEP Assistant Commissioner is an expert on water infrastructure regulations, and currently heads up the Chemistry Council of NJ.



44

PAT COLLIGAN

PRESIDENT NJ STATE POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

Colligan is an in-the-trenches trained expert on public pensions and benefits, and provides critical overarching insight to power players into police reform issues at a critical time in law enforcement history.



45

SHIRLEY TURNER

SENATOR, LD-15

What were you doing as insurrectionists tried to bury the country? While idiots wearing Confederate flags stormed the U.S. Capitol in 2021, the former chair of the Senate Education Committee continued to press forward with legislation to prioritize civics education. Turner also plays a critical role in the development of policy to combat youth mental health problems. Great on all education issues.





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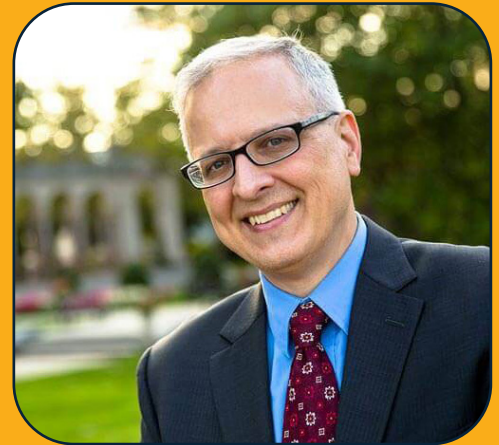
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PATRICK MURRAY

DIRECTOR OF MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY'S
POLLING INSTITUTE

In another presidential election year, look to the most accurate polling coming out of Long Branch. Murray built his seaside operation into one of the country's most-discussed and respected polling institutions. You know how you know he's good? He makes squirm those same people who were comfortable sitting on their hands during the 2021 storming of the Capitol.



47

CATHERINE TUNG

McCarter & English

With a particular focus on economic development and recovery, Tung worked on the tax incentive bill that was designed to diversify EDA's economic development toolkit to support sustainable growth, as well as many business assistance bills to ensure small business wellbeing during and after the pandemic.



48

JOHN MCKEON

SENATOR, LD-27

A legal brain and the natural heir to intellectual heavy hitters from another era like Wilfredo Caraballo and Joe Doria, the Senator from the 27th District came up short after he interviewed for the position of attorney general. Still one of the most educated elected officials on environmental issues, he seized the top LD-27 spot after the retirement from Trenton last year of state Senator (and former Governor) Richard Codey.



49

BRITNEE TIMBERLAKE

SENATOR, LD-34

In the aftermath 2020-21 redistricting, the 34th District Assemblywoman – very good on housing, healthcare and economic issues – succeeded state Senator Nia Gill (D-34).



50

SARAH FAJARDO

ACLU-NJ POLICY DIRECTOR



As the leader of ACLU-NJ's powerhouse policy team, Policy Director Fajardo proved a highly effective organizer who fosters meaningful relationships and impactful coalitions with local advocacy groups and legislators. Fajardo was integral in the creation and implementation of the People's Lane Duck Agenda, an initiative that successfully pushed for the passage of multiple long-stalled racial and social justice bills. She and her team continue to fight to save the Open Public Records Act, regularly meeting with electeds and partner organizations to protect government transparency and accountability across the state.

51

SHEREEF ELNAHAL

PRESIDENT/CEO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

The 21st Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health in the State of New Jersey in July 2019 became president/CEO of University Hospital in Newark.



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Shlomo Schorr
Director of Legislative Affairs

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52

SHOSHANNA PAGE

SENIOR POLICY ADVISER TO NEWARK
MAYOR RAS BARAKA

An inner sanctum occupant of Baraka world, Page is one of New Jersey's premier experts on urban issues.



53

AMOL SINHA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACLU-NJ

Sinha touts a background in journalism and law and is regarded by his peers as a constitutional rights expert.



54

KRISTINE ALLEN & CARY LOPEZ

ACT NOW FOUNDATION IN HUDSON COUNTY

Both excel at navigating the politics there to further their policy goals – which in its own right is laudable – increasing Alzheimers awareness, care, and funding. They combine policy chops with an on-the-ground understanding of the reality of the issue, advocating in the Statehouse, while caring directly for those afflicted – patients, caretakers, and families.



VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

55

ASSEMBLYWOMAN
(LD-15)

Critically engaged as the prime backer in the Assembly of the reintroduction of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New Jersey. “It’s about access,” the assemblywoman told InsiderNJ earlier this year. “This is a part of my DNA.”



“

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56

JEANNINE FRISBY LARUE

SR. VP, KAUFMAN ZITA

A former elected official, lobbyist, educator, healthcare executive, and government official, she lives at the nexus of NJ politics.



57

JENNIFER SCIORTINO

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR AT NEW
JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Former Statehouse veteran Sciortino, an active community member with years of government experience, who currently serves as Communications Director for the NJ Department of the Treasury, three years ago scored a seat on the Bordentown City Commission.



58

GENE LEPORE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NJ
ASSOCIATION OF STATE COLLEGES &
UNIVERSITIES (NJASCU)

Assuming leadership of the NJASCU in 2020, Lepore works with seven key public colleges and universities in the State. Previously, he spent over 10 years in the Senate Majority Office, where he served as Deputy Executive Director and Director of Budget and Fiscal Analysis. He has become a go-to higher education policy expert for legislators, staffers, the executive branch, and members of the media since taking over NJASCU.



59

SAM PESIN

PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF LIBERTY STATE PARK

New Jersey's leader in the protection of Liberty State Park, Jersey City's Pesin fights doggedly to withstand the commercialization of a precious national resource. Critical in exposing Fireman's donations to his second LSP front group of Bob Hurley and Commissioner Jerry Walker to push misinformation and smear attacks on behalf of the billionaire wanting LSP's Caven Point Natural Area, and the LSP Sports and Entertainment complex.





Pictured above:
Sean M. Spiller, President (center)
Steve Beatty, Vice President (left)
Petal Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer (right)

NJEA & its members

proud advocates for educators,
students, and the nation's
BEST public schools.

60

LUKE WOLFF

AT&T

A frontline staffer on the budget – a go-to guy on Senate Budget and Appropriations – Wolff made the transition from Sweeney to Nick Scutari, much to the relief of the caucus. He now works with AT&T.



61

AMI KACHALIA

ACLU-NJ CAMPAIGN STRATEGIST

Ami Kachalia, Campaign Strategist at the ACLU-NJ, is holding New Jersey accountable for how cannabis funds are used. Kachalia leads statewide policy advocacy campaigns for the civil rights organization, urging stakeholders to address the harmful impacts of the drug war with proven public health approaches and community reinvestment. She works in collaboration with lawmakers and community organizations to ensure that cannabis sales tax revenue and the Social Equity Excise Fee are used to fund resources for those most harmed by the criminalization of marijuana. Kachalia also serves as board chair of the New Jersey Harm Reduction Coalition.

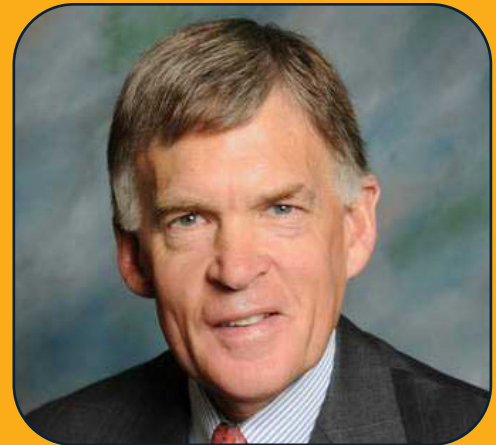


62

TOM BRACKEN

PRESIDENT AND CEO, NEW JERSEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A retired banker who has led the chamber for 12 years, Bracken in 2017 helped establish and became co-chair of Opportunity NJ, a coalition of major state business organizations supporting government policies that pave the way for job growth, affordability and prosperity in the state. In 2014, Bracken became chairman of Forward NJ, a coalition promoting investment in the state's transportation infrastructure. Also in 2014, Bracken was inducted into the New Jersey Business Hall of Fame.



63

TARA COLTON

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS AT THE NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NJEDA)

As the system absconds with people's tax dollars, and Legislative leadership attempts to figure out how to keep its dream of domination alive, Colton's actually doing something substantive and humane. She's acting to eliminate New Jersey's urban food desert crisis in cities like Camden, which coincidentally serves as the epicenter of political power in the state.



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To increase the visibility of its members and the business issues surrounding them, NJBIA produces a weekly television show on News 12+ each weekend.

Minding Your Business airs every Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. with an encore at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday. Each week, we highlight members and delve deep into the policy issues confronting companies throughout the state. Check us out at njbja.org/myb.

64

MEDINAH MUHAMMAD

DIRECTOR OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
AT NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

Now in a leadership position at the EDA, East Orange-based, Muhammad studied politics at Rutgers-Newark and proved a critical policy resource as chief of staff for Timberlake, as the assemblywoman rammed COVID-19 era legislation providing rental and mortgage relief to at-risk New Jerseyans.



65

TAI COOPER

CHIEF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER, NEW JERSEY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

The veteran Cooper has an intimate knowledge of government at all levels.



66

HENAL PATEL

SOCIAL JUSTICE CHAMPION

The former clerk for Justice Stuart Rabner directs the Democracy and Justice Program at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice.



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BRENDAN GILL, CEO

67

PHYLLIS SALOWE-KAYE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NEW JERSEY
CITIZEN ACTION

In an era of diminished trustworthy media sources, Salowe-Kaye leads a staff of public-minded commandos.



68

MARCUS RANDOLPH

PRESIDENT/CEO INVEST NEWARK

Formerly executive director within community development real estate for JPMorgan Chase Bank, Randolph oversees the City of Newark's Economic Development Corporation. This supports small, women and minority-owned businesses, invests in world-class internet service, spurs real estate development and executes economic development activities to produce and sustain equitable economic growth, generate jobs and create wealth for the citizens of Newark.



69

EDDIE KOLOGI

ATTORNEY

A key legal adviser to Senate President Scutari, the courtroom veteran continues to play a critical role in defending New Jersey's controversial and stringent gun laws.



70

DAN BENSON

MERCER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

A savvy political player, Benson also possesses deep-set progressive policy chops, which will serve him well as the successor of longtime Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes.





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71

ROY FREIMAN

ASSEMBLYMAN, LD-16

Chair of the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, Freiman has a problem-solving knack for avoiding the nonsense that goes into most governmental decisions, and a personality that makes people around him want to do better. A retired vice president of strategy and analytics for Prudential Financial, Freiman does something rare for powerful people in our solipsistic age: he actually listens.



72

KATHLEEN LONG

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER FOR THE CITY OF PATERSON

Long prides herself on paying special attention to urban, grassroots, and faith-based institutions. In her own words, this includes operations, budgets, strategic planning, project management, government/foundation/corporate relations, communications and marketing, social media engagement, and strategic fundraising (major gift solicitation, special event management, capital campaign design, grant writing, planned giving).



73

MICHAEL POWELL

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE CITY OF
PATERSON

Powell has on his plate the reestablishment of former silk factory town Paterson as a North Jersey economic engine. Paterson took significant swings of the bat on that front in 2024 as it reopened the historic Hinchliffe Stadium.



74

HUGH O'BEIRNE

NJ CANNABIS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT

Skilled in cannabis regulation and policy, government relations and legal writing, O'Beirne founded Hawthorne Ave. Strategies, which focuses on optimizing business outcomes and strategic goals for US and international cannabis operators.



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75

ALLISON LADD

DEPUTY MAYOR/DIRECTOR ECONOMIC AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (EHD) FOR THE CITY OF NEWARK

Expert in Real Estate Finance, Affordable Housing, Policy Analysis, Economic Development, and Real Estate Development, Ladd has key allies in Newark as a consequence of her constant insistence on equity. Key in the development of the Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective at 505 Clinton Avenue.



76

RICHARD SMITH

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY CHAPTER OF THE NAACP

Trenton native Smith, a retired corrections officer, played a critical role in bringing last year's national NAACP conference to Atlantic City. Close to Vice President Kamala Harris, the presumptive 2024 Democratic nominee for President.



77

ERIC DOBSON

FAIR SHARE HOUSING CENTER DEPUTY DIRECTOR

A major lowkey force, ordained minister Smith possesses deep powers of coalition building, the result of interfaith outreach.



78

JESSELY DE LA CRUZ

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT LATINO ACTION NETWORK

A licensed social worker, De La Cruz partners with Latino advocacy nonprofit agencies to support traditionally underserved populations. De La Cruz focuses on systemic approaches to the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse, and the healing of intergenerational trauma in families through the use of mindfulness based psychotherapies, play therapy and multi-systemic family therapy.





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79

PATRICIA CAMPOS-MEDINA

ACTIVIST

No critical Latino issue moves in New Jersey without the input of the good doctor, who proved a particularly potent force in securing drivers' licenses for noncitizens. Unsuccessful in her quest for a U.S. Senate seat this year, Campos-Medina nonetheless ran a tough-minded and substantive campaign.



80

DAN HARRIS

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR FOR SPEAKER
CRAIG COUGHLIN

Harris possesses real world grounding as a member of the Woodbridge Board of Education. Critical in the development of StayNJ.



81

DECLAN O'SCANLON

13TH DISTRICT STATE SENATOR



As a member of the state Senate Budget Committee, the Monmouth-based Republican provides a crucial watchdog role in a Democratic Party-dominant legislature. This year, he took to task the Newark Public Schools Superintendent for wasting over \$50,000 of taxpayer dollars on a “Superintendent’s Staff Fund Day” while certain buildings lack air conditioning, forcing students to brave abrasive heat waves. “I’ve been saying it for years that school districts receiving massive, unnecessary funding increases were going to find ways to shovel the ridiculous excess out the door. It’s outrageous,” said O’Scanlon. “Newark school district is thumbing its nose at the more than 150 school districts that are facing educationally damaging cuts this year, as well as their own students who need air conditioning.”

82

STEPHEN M. SCHEINTHAL

CHAIR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AND PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Scheinthal serves as a key New Jersey resource on the issue of mental health.



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83

PRISCILLA GARCES

ACTIVIST

Blind since birth, Garces wants to keep people connected worldwide, and to that end this year she co-organized a summit with representatives from different groups for a “Discussion on Empowering Different Abilities.” A member of Emerge New Jersey, Garces worked in the office of U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and later ran for the School Board in Newark. She also works as a climate activist and routinely publishes articles related to her work in climate and disability advocacy.



84

WAYNE RICHARDSON

ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Respected and prized former Essex County Commission President. Pioneering labor leader; jobs creator and trades educator. An expert on labor training issues, he co-founded the Pathways to Apprenticeship New Jersey, which helps prepare Black and Brown workers for Building Trades jobs.



85

JEFF TITTEL

FORMER DIRECTOR, NEW JERSEY
SIERRA CLUB

Even in retirement, Tittel remains a vital resource on New Jersey's environmental apocalypse. His secret? Policy grounded-ness, political astuteness and intimate awareness of local issues statewide.



86

ROB ASARO-ANGELO

COMMISSIONER OF THE NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Asaro-Angelo fought through criticism over his department's handling of massive unemployment claims at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, but had the public support of Governor Murphy – and NJ workers.



87

MARIA LOPEZ-NUÑEZ

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ORGANIZING
AND ADVOCACY,
IRONBOUND COMMUNITY
CORPORATION

Lauded for her work on the strongest environmental bill in the country, and for organizing for grassroots advocacy policy work with 'Compassion NJ', on all tenant and landlord relief bills, including the People's Bill.



88

SUSAN TELLONE

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF
TEEN SUICIDE

Ironbound Community Corporation' and blurb should be 'Lauded for her work on the strongest environmental bill in the country, and for organizing for grassroots advocacy policy work with 'Compassion NJ', on all tenant and landlord relief bills, including the People's Bill.



89

JAMES WILLIAMS

FAIR SHARE HOUSING

Highly regarded for his work on Ban the Box and tenant landlord relief bills, including the People's Bill.

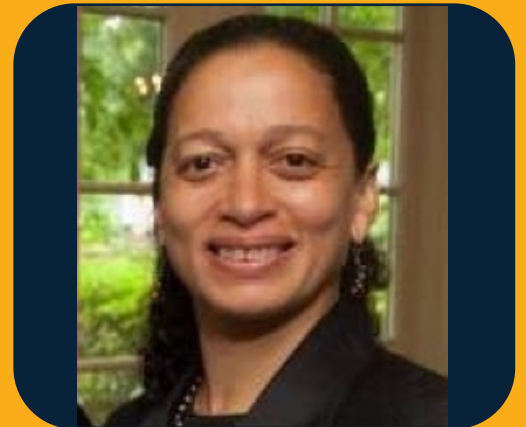


BEVERLY BROWN RUGGIA

90

NEW JERSEY CITIZEN ACTION

Prized for her work on consumer protections and tenant landlord relief bills, including the People's Bill.



91

JODY STEWART

ORGANIZER, NEW JERSEY RESOURCE PROJECT II

Started policy work after Superstorm Sandy, noted for her work during COVID-19 on tenant landlord relief bills, including the People’s Bill. Stewart helped whip bi-partisan support for each housing bill that made it to the floor.



92

RICHARD HENNING

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE NEW JERSEY UTILITIES ASSOCIATION

Head of the statewide trade association for investor-owned utilities, Henning is a veteran of corporate communications having previously served as Senior Vice President, Communications, Marketing & Government Affairs for Veolia. With New Jersey’s energy future among the forefront of issues in the state, NJUA is playing a prominent role in the discussion. Henning has become a go-to source for commentary on the issue in addition to his public testimony and discussions with legislators. He will play a key role as these issues continue to play out.



93

JACKIE CORNELL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF PLANNED
PARENTHOOD ACTION FUND OF
NEW JERSEY (PPAFNJ)

Cornell also serves as the Chief Government Relations Officer with Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central, and Southern New Jersey (PPNCSNJ).



94

JANICE FULLER

PRESIDENT, MID-ATLANTIC OF ANBARIC

Fuller leads efforts to develop offshore wind transmission infrastructure in multiple states. This includes a years-long effort in New Jersey to change policy to allow for separate planned transmission for offshore wind which ultimately resulted in the first in the nation State Agreement Approach. She has been a prominent voice in the offshore wind discussion, bolstered by her years of public service, including serving as Chief of Staff to Congressman and House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Frank Pallone. Fuller also served as the New Jersey Democratic Congressional Redistricting Chair prior to the 2022 mid-terms.



95

DAVE RIBLE

UTILITY AND TRANSPORTATION
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION'S
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Poised to assume the role of Chief Executive Officer upon the retirement of the current CEO, Robert Briant, Jr. Rible has been with UTCA since 2019. The UTCA of New Jersey represents approximately 1,000 member firms in the public and private sectors, active in all phases of heavy, highway, utility, and marine construction, as well as site work including remediation of brownfields and contaminated sites. The organization played a key role in the reauthorization of the state's Transportation Trust Fund as well as efforts to increase funding for and the speed with which the state's water infrastructure is replaced and rebuilt. UTCA is also advocating for a smart, sustainable plan to implement renewable energy policy in the state. Prior to joining UTCA, Rible was the Director of the New Jersey Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABC) and served in the New Jersey Assembly from 2008 until 2017. He is also a former Wall Township police officer and detective.

96

JOE BAUMANN

MANAGING PARTNER AT MCMANIMON
SCOTLAND AND BAUMANN

He is one of the most widely respected lawyers on municipal government in NJ – and another critical Fulop ally.



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Continued attacks on reproductive freedom, birth control, gender-affirming care, and IVF threaten our bodies, our health, and our futures.

New Jersey has proudly supported reproductive health care access and bodily autonomy, but there are still critical protections New Jersey needs to meet this moment in a post-Roe health care landscape.

In the face of an uncertain future, New Jersey must act now to ensure that reproductive freedom is protected in our state for years to come.

Pass the Reproductive Freedom and Health Equity Bill Package.



Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

www.ppactionnj.org

97

SHAYA BRODCHANDEL

CEO AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF
HARMONY DISPENSARY

Critical expert on cannabis issues impacting real world players.



98

ELIZABETH STAVOLA

MARIJUANA MAVEN

Leading female entrepreneur in the cannabis industry.



99

FAYEMI SHAKUR

ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR,
THE CITY OF NEWARK

If you're familiar with Newark, you know that the Baraka administration takes pride in realizing the artistic and cultural vitality of the city, the specific purview of Shakur.



100

JIE LI

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR, ROWAN
UNIVERSITY

An expert on offshore wind energy, Li has taken a stepped-up role in ensuring public understanding of alternative energy technology.

