

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

# GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY APPOINTS BILL CASTNER AS SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR ON FIREARMS

**Trenton** – Governor Phil Murphy today announced the appointment of Bill Castner as Senior Advisor to the Governor on Firearms for the state of New Jersey.

“New Jersey is leading the nation in tackling the epidemic of gun violence that takes innocent lives daily,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “The creation of the States for Gun Safety coalition was only the beginning. Bill Castner will play an active role in enhancing the coalition and will help our administration to advance new common-sense gun measures and potential avenues for legal challenges to stop the scourge of gun violence. Leading the force for gun violence protection to build safer communities and protect families at the state level is of the utmost importance, and I am confident that Bill will generate ideas and solutions that will save lives.”

“Governor Murphy in a very short period of time has already emerged as a national leader in our fight against gun violence,” **said Bill Castner**. “Despite complete inaction in Washington, New Jersey will lead the way in taking on the gun industry with aggressive, innovative and impactful ways to combat gun violence.”

“Leadership requires courage and commitment. While running for office Phil Murphy committed to doing more to protect New Jersey families and communities. We stood by his side then and are proud to stand with him today as we announce a new effort to address the trauma and tragedy brought on by senseless gun violence,” **said former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, co-founder of Giffords**. “We are excited to partner with Governor Murphy and Bill Castner to make sure New Jersey continues to be a national leader on gun safety. This is a model that will show others how we can take the fight against gun violence to the next level.”

Castner began his professional career drafting legislation for the Law & Public Safety division of the New Jersey Legislature’s nonpartisan Office of Legislative Services (OLS) and later became a public interest attorney for the Fair Share Housing Center, where he litigated New Jersey’s affordable housing and civil rights laws.

In 2002, General Assembly Speaker Albio Sires appointed Castner as the General Counsel to the New Jersey General Assembly where he served as the chief legislative adviser to that body. In 2006, Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts, Jr. promoted Castner as the Executive Director of the New Jersey General Assembly where he helped advance legislative measures on gun violence prevention.

Governor Jon S. Corzine appointed Castner Chief Counsel in 2009 where he provided legal advice to the Governor on a wide variety of legislative, regulatory and policy measures; was responsible for judicial appointments; and drafted executive orders. Castner served a lead role in the passage of New Jersey’s one-gun-a-month law in 2009.

Castner was appointed by Speaker Roberts in 2010 to serve on New Jersey’s State Commission of Investigation (SCI). In 2011, Castner was appointed Chief Counsel to the Democratic members of the New Jersey Apportionment Commission and in 2012 as Chief Counsel to the New Jersey Redistricting Commission.

Castner served as a partner at Gibbons P.C., where he served as Chair of the Government Affairs Department and practiced in the areas of corporate compliance, ethics, regulatory affairs and health care. At Gibbons, Castner represented Americans for Responsible Solutions (now Giffords Law Center).

In 2015, Castner was named Senior Vice President of Corporate & Regulatory Affairs at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey where he served as a senior officer.

During the New Jersey Supreme Court’s 2000-2001 term, Castner served as a law clerk to then-Associate Justice James R. Zazzali, who went on to become Chief Justice of the Court. Castner also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Sylvia B. Pressler, Presiding Judge for Administration of the Appellate Division, during the 1999-2000

term.

Castner graduated magna cum laude from Rowan University where he was the University's Distinguished Senior of the Year; received his J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law – Camden; his Masters of Science from the Eagleton Institute of Politics; and completed graduate courses at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. Castner, lives in Moorestown, New Jersey with his wife Georgette. They have three children.

Governor Murphy unveiled the historic "States for Gun Safety" coalition between New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Delaware, and Puerto Rico. The partnering states are working to enhance intelligence gathering, information sharing, and response efforts related to gun violence.

Following the announcement of the coalition, the Murphy administration announced the nation's first Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium. The consortium brings the thought leaders and top researchers from partner states together to undertake significant new research on all manners of gun violence, data collection and analysis across multiple disciplines. This unprecedented effort will provide the public, including policymakers, with new information to ultimately reduce the scourge of gun violence. This groundbreaking consortium fills the void left by the federal government's 1996 ban on the use of federal funds to study gun violence, which has obstructed research efforts across the nation, including at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

Additionally, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 21. This measure states that the Department of Law and Public Safety will share information publicly about guns used in crimes and the source of those guns.

Through the appointment of Bill Castner and the aforementioned initiatives, Governor Murphy will work to strengthen New Jersey's gun laws and to push the federal government to adopt common-sense gun safety measures.

Castner will advise the Governor and his administration on a pro bono basis for 60 days. Additional long-term work related to Castner's position will be covered through existing state resources.

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