

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy

The 82nd Annual New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Walk to Washington & Congressional Dinner

02/28/2019

Governor Phil Murphy

February 28, 2018

Remarks Prepared for Delivery

Good evening!

It is great to be here in our nation's capital.

Thank you, Jim Fakult, for your introduction and for JCP&L's continued sponsorship of the Walk to Washington.

I have to also give a shout-out to the Chamber's great leadership team which keeps this organization a respected voice on so many issues, a group headed by President and CEO Tom Bracken and Board Chairman, Bank of America's Bob Doherty.

Through you, I thank the entire executive committee, board, and staff of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

That includes Mike Egenton. I have never met Mike, but I am told he celebrated his 25th anniversary at the Chamber back in October. In all seriousness, I know Mike well and I made some jokes at his expense for that occasion, and I know he's been itching to get me back, so it's a good thing I didn't take the train.

To Cardinal Tobin, a dear friend who as fate would I have it I first met on the Walk to Washington, and Rabbi David Levy, it is an honor to be with you both, and all of the faith leaders with us this evening.

It is also an honor to be with the Commanding Officer of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Colonel Neil Richardson – to you, Colonel, and through you to all the men and women stationed in New Jersey, thank you for your service to our nation and our founding values.

God bless our active duty military, and all of our veterans.

To our distinguished elected officials and public servants. It is especially great to see so many members of our Congressional Delegation, led this evening by our Senior Senator Bob Menendez – and especially our great new House class with Representatives Andy Kim, Tom Malinowski, Mikie Sherrill, and Jeff Van Drew.

Mike Egenton said that he has never seen so many at this dinner. I think it's because we're all recognizing that, now more than ever, we're in this together. Business. Labor. Non-profits. Community Organizations. Faith Communities. Government.

Our Congressional delegation is serving on some of the most important committees for our state and for our business community – starting with Senator Menendez as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development...and Senator Booker on both the Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and Environment and Public Works committees.

Congressman Frank Pallone as chairman of Energy and Commerce...

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman on Appropriations, and Congressman Bill Pascrell on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade...

Congressmen Albio Sires, Donald Payne, and Tom Malinowski on Transportation and Infrastructure...

Congressman Chris Smith on the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security and Trade...

Congressman Andy Kim and Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill on Armed Services...

Congressman Donald Norcross on Armed Services and, also, Labor.

Congressman Josh Gottheimer on Financial Services...

Congressman Jeff Van Drew on both Agriculture and Natural Resources.

And, it has to be said, with Senator Booker running for president, we're going to be able to highlight all the good things that go on in, and come from, New Jersey.

I thank each of them for their service to our state and its communities, and I look forward to our partnership, on issues big and small, to better our communities.

One of those big issues is reinstating the full state and local tax deduction for our taxpayers. I have met some of the residents preparing their federal taxes and who are now wondering what happened to the tax cut they were promised. This is a matter of fairness, and I am proud to join our delegation in the fight to restore the full SALT deduction.

Another of those big issues is Gateway. I have made no secret of my determination to get Gateway funded and built. You all know the tremendous importance of this project, as well – from the jobs it will create, to the jobs and economic activity it will support.

Our funding is lined up. When it comes to the replacement of the Portal Bridge, we're also shovel-ready. All we need is for the president to come in with the federal government as our partner.

On Monday, I joined my fellow governors at the White House as part of our annual National Governors Association meeting. I had a moment to speak privately with the president, and I again made the case to him for Gateway.

I remain optimistic that we will get this done. We have to get this done. No single project is as critical to our state's core infrastructure or our economic future.

Gateway goes hand-in-hand with our other infrastructure investments – whether it be NJ TRANSIT or the 69th Street Bridge in North Bergen – in making our case to families and businesses that New Jersey is where you want to be. They strengthen communities as they strengthen our future and our economy.

By any measure, we are seeing the growth potential of our economy

In 2018, we saw another year of positive job growth. And, according to the employer poll taken by that other business group in Trenton, a majority of businesses are planning to give their workers raises in 2019.

That's good, since we know that higher wages – especially in the hands of the middle class, and those aspiring to join the middle class – go into the broader economy through new purchases.

But, we're not just creating jobs at a healthy clip, we're also creating new businesses that create jobs.

Here is a data point that that is a little wonky, yes, but important. The United States Census Bureau tracks applications for new businesses that have a high potential to turn into firms with payroll. Through the third quarter of 2018 these business applications were up four percent in New Jersey versus 2017. By even greater comparison, these business applications were actually down nearly three percent across the previous five years.

This tells me that the policies we're seeking to implement are, in fact, already building the framework of a stronger and fairer economy. The investments we are making in education, in infrastructure, in workforce development, and

in our communities -- the investments that support business -- are already starting to pay off.

Now, without tipping too many pitches, I'll let you know that the budget I will unveil on Tuesday will continue these critical investments. We know they are vital to you and your businesses, to ensuring a top-tier talent pool and allowing good and services to flow across the state, and to markets outside New Jersey.

But, this budget will also be different.

Perhaps more than any other in recent memory, it will put forward significant and sustainable savings – that's good for our bottom line, and even better for our taxpayers. It will continue our work to lessen the weight on our property taxpayers and build on last year's progress, which saw the lowest annual increase in the average statewide property tax on record.

The budget I will propose in five days will include even bigger steps to move us back to the principles of good governance and sound fiscal practices that our residents demand, that the bond rating agencies want, and which administrations and legislatures of both parties had evaded for far too long.

I will speak once again to my commitment to tax fairness for our middle-class families and seniors – and I mention, once again, the countless middle-class taxpayers who are wondering where their promised federal tax cut went.

And, yes, you are going to hear a renewed call for changing the way our corporate tax incentive programs work.

Let me say, yet again, that I recognize the critical role tax incentives can play in economic development and job creation. That is not – and has never been – the issue. Many businesses represented in this room have benefitted, one way or another, from an incentive. There are many, many good actors here.

My commitment to attracting more high-wage, high-growth jobs to New Jersey has not, and will not, change.

What must change is the way in which we have approached this. In obligating ourselves to \$11 billion in total incentives, we have lost the balance between the rewarding incentives and the ability to maintain investments in the things that will help ultimately help businesses that receive them.

When we lose \$1 billion in revenues due to tax breaks, as we are this upcoming fiscal year, we lose \$1 billion to invest in education and workforce development, in community redevelopment, and NJ TRANSIT and infrastructure.

In October, I put forward a comprehensive plan for economic growth that included a more strategically and fiscally prudent system of incentives. Instead of open-ended, broadly defined programs, we put forward the framework for capped and strategically focused incentives – incentives that would grow the businesses we need for our future, and in the places where investment would have an outsized impact.

The incentive programs I am proposing are forward-looking and community-focused. With exciting ideas like the Innovative Evergreen Fund, they will encourage more startups and entrepreneurs, and allow our investments to do more. They can help us attract and keep young people in our state, and rebuild communities.

If we deploy these right, in five years there will be a lot more New Jersey-grown business leaders in this room.

I was heartened by the reception that our economic plan received. I don't want to unnecessarily put Tom on the spot, but his remark to reporters that it was the best economic speech he had heard over his half-century in Trenton was particularly telling.

One, it told me that Tom looks really great for his age. But, it also told me we had hit the sweet spot. We hit the spot where economic progress and social progress meet – where stronger meets fairer – where vision and reality can be one.

And, I believe that our budget will continue to hit this sweet spot for our state, our residents, and, yes, our business community.

I am proudly both progressive and pro-growth. This, to me, isn't a zero-sum game. In fact, it is the ultimate 1+1=3.

I want to be your partner not just in growing our economy, but also in protecting the things that make New Jersey a great home for the innovative businesses that are going to fuel our future and help us to reclaim the mantle of

economic leadership we once so proudly held.

This is all possible if we work together. All of us, from Washington to Trenton, and all across our state.

I thank you all for the time tonight, and I look forward to chatting with as many of you as possible following the dinner. I didn't take the train – I have some time to make up for!

Thank you!

[Back to Top](#)

Powered by [Google Translate \(https://translate.google.com\)](https://translate.google.com)

[Translator Disclaimer \(/governor/disclaimer.shtml\)](/governor/disclaimer.shtml)

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/fl/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/bca/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562019/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562019/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses/\)](/governor/news/addresses/)

[Executive Orders \(/nj.gov/infobank/eo/\)](https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press/\)](/governor/news/press/)

Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

Statewide

[NJ Home \(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(/www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(/www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(/www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(/www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(/www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(/www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

[Accessibility Statement \(/www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)

[\(/nj.gov/opra/\)](https://nj.gov/opra/)

[\(/nj.gov/transparency/\)](https://nj.gov/transparency/)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2018
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000

[\(https://tech.nj.gov/\)](https://tech.nj.gov/)