

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs First Responders Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Protection Act Into Law

Posted on - 01/14/2026

Reaffirms Commitment to the Mental Health and Well-Being of New Jersey's First Responders

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed

[S2373/A2145 \(https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S2500/2373_R3.PDF\)](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S2500/2373_R3.PDF), also known as the New Jersey First Responders Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Protection Act, providing employment protections for paid first responders diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder under certain conditions.

“Our first responders put themselves on the line daily to keep our residents safe,” **said Governor Murphy**. “This bill recognizes the real and lasting impact that traumatic experiences can have and ensures that first responders are treated with dignity, compassion, and fairness when they need it most.”

The New Jersey First Responders Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Protection Act prohibits employers from discharging, harassing, retaliating, or otherwise discriminating against a paid first responder who requests or takes leave related to a qualifying diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. It also guarantees that a first responder who has taken such leave will be restored to their prior position once they are cleared to return to work by a mental health professional.

The Act applies to a broad range of first responders, including law enforcement officers; paid firefighters; paid members of duly incorporated first aid, emergency, or rescue squad associations; paid emergency medical technicians; paid paramedics; and paid 9-1-1 first responder dispatchers. By extending these protections, the bill acknowledges the cumulative psychological toll associated with exposure to traumatic incidents such as violent crimes, serious accidents or injuries, and medical emergencies.

Employers who violate the law may be subject to legal action. The bill allows affected employees or former employees to file an action in the Division of Workers' Compensation and the judge of compensation may order remedies including reinstatement to employment, restoration of lost benefits and seniority rights, back pay, and other appropriate relief.

The bill will take effect immediately.

The primary sponsors of S2373/A2145 are Senators James Beach and Linda Greenstein, and Assemblymembers

William Moen Jr., Sterley Stanley, and Joe Danielsen.

“First responders face unimaginable stress and trauma in service of the public good, which, left untreated, can have devastating effects,” **said Senator Beach**. “This bill provides an opportunity for first responders to seek the mental health treatment that they need without fearing that their job security is at risk.”

“This legislation serves a promise to stand with our first responders in their time of need,” **said Senator Greenstein**. “It is time we acknowledge and work to remove the stigma around mental health for the individuals who work so tirelessly to keep our communities safe. When a first responder is diagnosed with PTSD, their job should be protected as if they were out for a physical injury.”

“Our first responders are the heroes who run toward danger when others flee, and yet, far too often, they are left to face the aftermath of their sacrifices alone,” **said Assemblyman Moen**. “Bill A2145 will be a lifeline for so many of New Jersey’s finest and is a necessary step toward ensuring that our first responders can seek the help they need without fear of retaliation.”

“First responders rush toward danger to keep us safe and too often, endure mental health challenges as a result,” **said Assemblyman Stanley**. “With the signing of A2145 into law, we ensure that those who have given so much of themselves in service to our communities receive the respect, care, and employment protections they deserve.”

“The men and women who run toward danger carry invisible scars of the trauma they experience on the job, scars that often stay with them long after their service to their community has ended,” **said Assemblyman Joe Danielsen**. “For too long, first responders have quietly carried the weight of that trauma, sidelined from getting the care they need because of stigma or fear of risking their livelihood. Through this legislation we’re making it unmistakably clear that our first responders should be met with support and their service honored with the protections they have earned.”

“As fire fighters, we answer the call no matter the emergency, and too often that means facing traumatic scenes that most people will never experience,” **said Edward Kelly, General President, IAFF**. “This bill recognizes that reality by making it illegal for employers to fire, discipline, or harass first responders for seeking treatment so they can recover and return to work. Through the advocacy of the PFANJ, New Jersey fire fighters will now have the job protections they need, and we are grateful to Gov. Murphy for standing with us and signing this bill into law.”

“Firefighters and first responders are exposed to traumatic events as a routine part of the job. We respond to tragedy, violence, and loss knowing it comes with a personal cost. This law is about fairness and job protection—ensuring that first responders who suffer from service-connected PTSD are not punished for doing the job they were sworn to do. It provides clear protections so our members can seek help, remain employed, and support their families without fear of retaliation or career-ending consequences,” **said Matthew Caliente, President, PFANJ**. “We are grateful to Governor Murphy for his commitment to signing this bill into law and for recognizing the importance of protecting those who protect our communities. We also thank Senate President Scutari, Speaker Coughlin, Majority Leader Greenwald, and the bill’s sponsors—Senators Beach and Greenstein, along with Assemblymen Moen, Stanley, and Danielsen—for their leadership and partnership in getting this legislation across the finish line. Their support ensured this bill moved with purpose and became real law, not just a promise. This victory belongs to every first responder who carried this burden quietly, every family that stood beside them, and every advocate who refused to let this issue be ignored. The PFANJ never stopped pushing, never stopped believing, and never stopped fighting—because protecting our members doesn’t end when their shift ends. This law will save lives, and that is the only outcome that matters.”

“The signing of this bill provides certain mental health protections for the Firefighters of the State of New Jersey,” **said Robert Ordway, President, New Jersey State Firefighter’s Association.** “Firefighters see and experience trauma on all different levels and we thank the Legislature and Governor for recognizing that.”

“The NJFMBA has been stressing the importance of mental health for our first responders for decades,” **said Eddie Donnelly, President, NJFMBA.** “This Bill will be extremely helpful in providing relief as our members pursue outlets to address their issues. We thank the sponsors and our Governor for signing this monumental piece of legislation.”

The 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also contact 9-8-8 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. You can call or text directly to 9-8-8 or chat at [www.988Lifeline.org/chat \(https://chat.988lifeline.org/\)](https://chat.988lifeline.org/).

Governor Phil Murphy

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

Administration

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

[Lt. Governor Tahesha Way \(/governor/admin/lt\)](#)

[In memoriam of Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt-sheila-y-oliver\)](#)

[Senior Staff \(/governor/admin/staff\)](#)

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

[Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy \(/governor/climateaction/\)](#)

[Office of Equity \(/governor/admin/equity/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

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

[New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission \(https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/\)](https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/)

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

[Governor's Fellows Program \(/governor/admin/fellows\)](#)

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

Key Initiatives

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

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

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

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

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

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

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562026/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562026/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

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

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[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)

[Bluesky \(https://bsky.app/profile/govmurphy.bsky.social\)](https://bsky.app/profile/govmurphy.bsky.social)

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))

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

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

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

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2026
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000