

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: July 17th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon. I am honored, as always, to be joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, another familiar face, the State's Epidemiologist, Dr. Christina Tan, thank you both, as always. The guy to my left who again needs no introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Pat Callahan. We're also joined by Jared Maples, the Director of the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

Last night, I was proud to sign legislation providing our administration with the full authority to borrow essential funds to secure the core services we will rely upon as we emerge from this pandemic. And again, I want to thank my partners in the Legislature, Senate President Steve Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and the members of each House for their support. This is obviously not a step that any of us ever wished to have to take. Our administration has worked incredibly hard over the past couple of years to point our state in an entirely new fiscal direction. We had record high surpluses, record low reliance on things like one-shot revenues, and we had made the first deposit in a decade into the rainy day fund. But today, it is pouring.

This is a historically unprecedented fiscal crisis. We have produced a three-month budget that cuts deeply into the programs that millions of residents rely upon, and we'll be producing a new fiscal year 2021 budget that does that and more. Yet the brutal reality we face is that cuts simply will not be enough, given the storm that is raging around us. We simply can't cut our way out of this. Our successful recovery from this pandemic requires us to look and lean forward. We cannot be pushed backward. And absent this step, I have yet to hear one idea from its opponents as to how they would move us forward. What we don't need is a return to the old

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way of doing things. We need flexibility and creativity. We need to provide property tax relief for our seniors and middle-class families. We need to fund our schools. We need to provide services to the most vulnerable, our returning citizens in our underserved communities. We need to make New Jersey the state where everyone, not just some but everyone, can thrive.

This is the position from which I stand. The coronavirus has laid bare the inequities in our society, and I will not stand by and see them made worse, or for countless new families to be caught in their traps. We must move forward responsibly and deliberately. We will and we are.

Next, today I am signing an Executive Order to provide greater assurance the federal coronavirus relief funds we are receiving will be spent expeditiously, properly and transparently. I'm creating within my Office the Governor's Disaster Recovery Office, which will serve as the center point of contact and coordination for COVID-19 recovery programs funded through the CARES Act and other sources of federal funds. In essence, this new Office will replace and assume the responsibilities of the Office of Recovery and Rebuilding established in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. The Office will ensure that all funds are expended in compliance with federal rules and regulations, and that strategies and policies are aligned across all of our state's departments. I am further requiring the creation of a transparency website to track the offices progress and independently of that website, I will require an annual report to be produced.

Additionally, I am creating a COVID-19 Compliance Taskforce to review all COVID-related procurements above a certain dollar threshold, ensure internal controls and provide compliance training to all agencies receiving COVID-19 funds. The taskforce will also establish an integrity oversight monitoring program with a pool of outside vendors to ensure agencies guard against fraud, waste and abuse of any COVID-19 funds. Integrity monitors will submit quarterly reports to the Disaster Recovery Office, the Attorney General, the Comptroller, and both the Senate President and the Assembly Speaker, as well as post them online.

Dan Kelly, Executive Director -- there's Dan on the left -- Executive Director of the Office of Recovery and Rebuilding will now lead the Disaster Recovery Office, and I'm designating the guy on the right, Acting State Comptroller Kevin Walsh, to lead the Compliance Task Force. A very heavy Irish dose there; Pat, I think you would agree. We are fighting for every possible penny of COVID-19 relief and every penny we receive and properly invest in our recovery is one that we don't have to borrow. We are putting in place the oversight we need for this moment to give the public greater confidence in our work and to ensure that our restart and recovery moves forward.

Before I move on, I want to give a shout out to these two guys, South Amboy Mayor Fred Henry on the left, and Police Chief Darren LaVigne on the right, for their quick work to prevent a single mother who was a survivor of domestic violence, by the way, and her child from being evicted from their home by their landlord. I reached out to each one of these guys this morning to thank them personally. Let me be perfectly clear, and we've said this before, under Executive Order, under no circumstances may any landlord attempt to evict a tenant, or even threaten a tenant with eviction throughout this emergency. No one should fear losing their home. Thankfully, Mayor Henry and Chief LaVigne were able to step in to protect this family from being tossed out of their home, and I thank each of them from the bottom of my heart.

And as a reminder to all renters and landlords, we have set up a standalone page on our information hub, and you can see it right there. [covid19.nj.gov/renter](https://www.covid19.nj.gov/renter), which directly spells out your rights and responsibilities. Folks, make that your first stop. Additionally, today is the last day for qualified tenants to apply for the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The application window closes at 5:00 p.m. today and for that, go to the website at the bottom there, [nj.gov/DCA](https://www.nj.gov/DCA) for more information and to apply. Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, who has been a crusader on this and so many other fronts in our government deserves a particular shout out.

Now let's move on to the overnight numbers. Today we're announcing, July, 202 new cases, positive cases. The statewide cumulative total is now 176,551. The daily positivity rate for tests recorded on July 13 was 1.66%, which keeps us among the lowest positivity rates in the entire country, and that's due to you all out there. That means 98.5%, plus or minus, of folks who got tested on July 13th are negative for the coronavirus and for COVID-19. However, that's the good news.

However, our rate of transmission is up overnight to 1.11. I believe, Judy, yesterday it was at 1.0. Am I right? Yes. This means that each new positive cases leading to one or slightly more than one more positive case. Folks, we need to get that RT back down to where we are actively slowing the spread of this virus. Judy, you may be able to give us in your remarks some color as to some of the hotspots and counties that are on our radar screen. And the only way we can keep our positivity rate and our RT, or rate of transmission low, is by taking the precautions that we have across the past four months. Remember, there's no therapeutic yet, there will be, God Willing, soon. There's no vaccine yet. Again, God willing, there will be soon. All we've got is social distancing, wearing a face covering whenever you are out in public, and certainly whenever you're indoors, washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. We haven't said this in a while, or two happy birthdays, and staying home if you exhibit any symptoms of respiratory illness.

And it means, by the way, going out and getting tested. Go again to covid19.nj.gov/testing to find a testing site near you. Testing is available to everyone. I want to just say a quick timeout before we move on. We know that not with all labs, but with some of the labs, the return, the lag time between test and hearing whether you're positive or negative – and thank God mostly negative – has extended and it's not surprising. I think it's largely, Judy, a strain on the reagent, the national reagent availability.

Our team was on with the White House on this both last night and this morning, and it shouldn't surprise any of us. So it's not a New Jersey issue. It is a national issue because of the huge, sadly because of the huge flare ups of cases in places like Florida, Texas, Arizona, California, South Carolina, etc. So we understand that folks, so we're doing everything we can to try to break that logjam on behalf of New Jersey. No state has the per capita capacity that we have in New Jersey.

George Helmy and I were speaking, Judy, just coming over here. I think our capacity is now up to 40,000 on any given day. Per capita, that's in a league by itself. But it's taking longer get your results, not from all the labs, but from some of the labs and I want folks to know, we know that and we're doing everything we can to try to break that logjam.

Next, today in our hospitals we're treating 844 total patients yesterday, and Judy, for the first time we're going to explicitly say today, and I think we'll change the chart as of Monday, if that's okay, that of those 844, and you've been a leader on this, 397 are known COVID positive, and 447 are listed as persons under investigation pending, as we mentioned, test results. And we'll start to break that out, I think every day for folks, right? The number of patients requiring intensive care was 139, and there were 65 ventilators in use, and that is certainly the lowest in a long, long time.

These hospital metrics continue to move us and our healthcare networks in the right direction. We continue to see progress across our hospitals. But we still have many reasons to remain vigilant and to keep up with our social distancing. You can see there in terms of where we rank nationally and today, with the heaviest of hearts, we're reporting that another 20 folks across the state have been confirmed to have passed from complications of COVID-19. However, as we have been regularly noting of late, most of these deaths actually occurred some time ago and are only today being added to the confirmed count. Again, I pride, and we should all take pride in the fact we want to get this exactly as right as we can.

For example, Judy, of the deaths we're reporting today, seven occurred within the past five days and the remainder before that. I know Judy will give a further breakdown of that amount. The toll on our state is an unfathomable 13,710 confirmed deaths, and the number of probable passing from COVID-19 related complications stays and remains at 1,974. So of those we have lost, let's remember a few, as we do each day.

I want to begin in Middlesex County to remember Alphonse Baldino and Jenny Baldino. They were the parents of three daughters, Lisa, Jennifer and Alison, and I had the great honor of speaking with Alison yesterday. They were also the grandparents of their daughters' five children. Now, Alphonse and Jenny were no longer married, and they lived in separate places, but they both passed away due to complications of COVID-19. Alphonse, right in front of us there, was raised in the Kingston section of South Brunswick in Middlesex County, a graduate of South Brunswick High School, he was a proud Vietnam War veteran, a member of the United States Army and of American Legion Post 401. Alphonse was 74 years old. For more than a half a century he was the proud owner of Princeton Food Services, a vending machine supply

company that he lovingly referred to simply as "the shop" and where he treated his employees as though they were part of his own family. The key to running a successful business, Alphonse would say, was doing what he loved with people who we loved.

Outside the shop, Alphonse was an avid fisherman, and he always took time to root for his New Jersey Devils and the New York Football Giants. He loved life and loved going on adventures, especially if there was a good time to follow. He is survived by his wife of the past 36 years, Joanne, and their son Alphonse Jr. May God bless him and thank you for your service to our nation, Alphonse.

So roughly 10 weeks later, Jennie Baldino also lost her battle with COVID-19. Jenny was born and raised in New Brunswick and lived for many years in North Brunswick, and most recently was a resident of Robbinsville. Jenny worked for 10 years as a secretary for the Eastern Express Trucking Company, and then spent another 22 years as a clerk for the United States Postal Service in the Milltown branch until her retirement in 2009. In both jobs, she was the one person everyone knew, coworkers and customers alike, the person who was always helpful and always, as you can see there, always smiling.

But being a mother was the job Jennie enjoyed the most. Her family will remember her as a gentle soul with a kind heart, always ready to welcome others into her home for coffee and freshly baked cake and the keeper of a legendary recipe for sauce and meatballs. I appeal to the Persichillis to my right, here. Jennie was 79 years old. In addition to her daughters and grandchildren, she also leaves her sister-in-law Phyllis, her niece Gina and nephew Greg, and great-nephews Brendon and Chad. May God bless and watch over you Jennie and your family.

Finally, we remember Ludovino Alcantara of Passaic. Ludo, as he was known, was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States, as millions, tens of millions of others have for better opportunities for himself and a better future for his family. Ludo worked as a truck driver and although diabetes took both of his legs later in life, he never lost his strength, his independence and his pride. Though he loved his adopted homeland, he was always willing to share stories from the Dominican Republic with his grandchildren, ensuring that they to always swelled with Dominican pride. Together, Ludo and his wife Anna and by the way, Anna fought her own battle against COVID-19, keep her in your prayers. They had six children, 20 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Ludo was 86 years old. I had the honor of speaking with his son-in-law yesterday, Louis. A tremendous and tightknit family, one of the many who know all too well the grief of losing a central figure to this virus. So may God bless Ludovico and may his family soon have the opportunity to give him the full celebration of life which he so richly earned. Let's keep each of these folks and everyone else we have lost and every impacted family in our prayers.

Switching gears if I may, I want to come back to a topic we have been discussing every week for the past couple of months, and which is incredibly important for our future. and that is the 2020 census. Each week, more and more New Jerseyans are taking the time to respond to the 2020 census. Currently, 64.1% of New Jersey households have already been counted. The darker the blue on this map, by the way, the more residents who have responded. The census is more than just a headcount that determines how many members of Congress we get, although it does do that. The census impacts more than, you ready? \$45 billion in annual federal funding for New Jersey's communities and it does it for a decade, so that's at least \$450 billion US dollars. Funding for public health programs and services, funding for our schools, housing, transportation, infrastructure, services for our seniors, our kids and our most vulnerable residents, and much, much more. Making sure we have an accurate count means we get more back from Washington to invest in our communities. Our complete count team is working its way across New Jersey to make sure everyone knows about their civic duty to respond. For example, as you can see, last week our team was in Cumberland County. And next week, we will begin working even more closely with our faith communities. And by the way, it's this simple. Go to 2020census.gov, there you see it, and get counted. And if you do that now, you won't have a census official knocking on your door later. The census is secure. It's easy, and it's really important. And it's also, folks, it's your civic and our civic duty, so please get counted.

Finally, for today, I'd like to give a shout out to another of the small businesses that we will be relying upon to make sure that our economic restart and recovery reaches into not most, but every community. We know these past four months have been really hard on many small businesses, and through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, we've established a series of programs to help them through these unprecedented times. Today, I'd like to recognize Nyah Beauty, a small soapmaking business based in Carney

that specializes in handcrafted, plant-based skincare products. Nyah Beauty was started in 2003 by Lashonda Tyree, a Patersonian, by the way, who took what was a hobby and turn it into a successful business, with clients ranging from Macy's Flower Show to Kean University to Barclays Bank. In addition to producing her own line, Lashonda teaches others how to make natural soaps and skincare through in-person, hands-on classes.

COVID-19 hit Nyah Beauty hard as private label clients paused orders, the supply chain became strained, and in-person classes could not continue. While Lashonda kept Nyah Beauty's online store open, the future of her total business, frankly, was in doubt. But thankfully, Lashonda applied for and received a small business grant from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, which has allowed her to cover the costs of overhead so she could focus on fulfilling online orders and acquiring new customers. I have the great pleasure of checking in on Lashonda yesterday, and Nyah Beauty, and she is optimistic for the future.

And Lashonda herself, by the way, is emerging as a leader in our state's entrepreneurial community and now also guides others setting out to start their own businesses as a graduate of Rising Tide Capital's Community Business Academy. So to you, Lashonda, thank you for not letting COVID-19 make you give up your dreams for Nyah Beauty and for being a new leader in our small business community.

I have to say a quick, I'm calling a quick audible, Tammy and I made a cameo, I wish we could have stayed longer, appearance at another Last Dance World Series game last night again in Red Bank. The atmosphere was electric, it was America at its best. Great to have baseball back in. A significant amount of face coverings, Pat and Judy, which was good. Not as much social distancing as we would have liked but a fair amount of face coverings and great baseball. There are now, I believe, 33 teams left because there should be 32, 16 in the North and 16 in the South region, but there is still a game to be played on Saturday. Most of these teams won all three of their pool games, so most of the teams that made it, so the 33 still left, most of them are 3-and-0, and the North region has 16 and will have 16 as of Saturday, South will have 16. And I believe the round of 16 will take place beginning on Tuesday, July 21, and I know the whole show ends right here in Trenton on July 31. I want to give a big shout out to our friend, Senator Paul Sarlo, his Woodridge squad is at 3-and-0 and have made it to the final 16 in the North region. So hats off to all the teams, by the way. There were over 200, well over 200 that started in this tournament, and it's great to have baseball back in New Jersey.

Next, the weather forecast says it's going to be a really hot weekend and hot at least through into early to midweek, which means that we should expect another weekend of people getting outside, heading to our beaches, lakes, riverfronts. I was at Lake Hopatcong yesterday, which is a magical jewel in our state, and had a great meeting with some of the mayors there. So as we all get out, folks, let's not forget the need for social distancing or wearing a mask or some other face covering. You've got to do that always when you're indoors, and especially outdoors when social distancing isn't possible.

We continue to make great progress together. Over the past four months, we have pulled as one state to pull the curve of new cases way, way down. And with it, the number of our fellow New Jerseyans who have been hospitalized with COVID-19, and also the number of brothers and sisters who we have lost. It could be easy for us to look at how far we've come and get complacent. But then I would ask you to only look at what is happening around the rest of the country. What we experienced, Judy, in March and April, others are experiencing now. Just examples, in California, and frankly right next door in Pennsylvania, restrictions that had been relaxed have been tightened back again. This is one reason why we have been so careful and deliberate in our approach, even when some didn't like what we had to say, and we understand that. But I do not want us to have to go back to where we were. We've been through hell and we don't want to go through hell again. I would rather only have to do things once, and I know Pat and Judy and Tina and the rest of the team join me on that.

We've gotten another proof point for this approach from the COVID Exit Strategy, which is a consortium, we've showed you this before, of public health experts and data crunchers, including researchers at Duke University's Margolis Center for Health Policy, among others. And according to their metrics, New Jersey ranks as one of only five states along with New York, Connecticut, Vermont and Maine who continue to trend in the right directions overall, with regard to our progress against COVID-19 and the spread of coronavirus. The only way we stay in the green is by continuing to do all we have done over the past few months. This is

no time to let up. If anything, now is the time to redouble our efforts and keep our progress going. So when you go out this weekend, folks, be smart, be safe, keep your distances, wash your hands frequently or use a sanitizer and wear something over your face. We are going to defeat COVID-19 together.

With that, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor and good afternoon. Well, today the department is announcing that effective Monday, we will launch an electronic survey to collect information on out-of-state travelers that arrive at New Jersey's airports. The airlines will make an announcement about the travel advisory on impacted states and the survey at the point of departure and in flight while en route to New Jersey. Travelers will be connected to an electronic survey that will collect information about where they are traveling from, their residence and their destination. The survey lists the states affected by the travel advisory.

As you know, the list is updated weekly and it applies to travel from certain states identified as those that have positive COVID-19 test rates higher than 10 per hundred thousand residents, or have a 10% or higher positivity rate over a seven-day rolling average. The electronic survey will be accessible by texting NJ Travel to the number 898-211, or by visiting covid19.nj.gov/njtravel, or by scanning a QR code on posters that will be placed at airports this Monday. Travelers can bring up the form on their phones through any of those actions. Once they have filled out the survey, the information will be submitted to the county health departments. Once the health department receives the traveler's info, we are asking them to call the traveler to remind them of the request to self-quarantine, and to make sure that they know where to go for testing if needed, and ascertain if they have any other needs related to self-quarantine.

The self-quarantine advisory is voluntary, but compliance is expected. It is relying on personal accountability. Individuals should leave the place of quarantine only to seek medical care or treatment, or to obtain food and other essential items. It is vital that individuals traveling from heavily impacted states cooperate so we can avoid creating community outbreaks in our state.

Moving on to my daily report, our hospitals reported, as the Governor shared, 844 hospitalizations with only 139 individuals COVID positive in critical care, and a low number of 46% on ventilators. There are no new reports, fortunately, of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, so that total remains at 53 cases in our state.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths reported today. In terms of deaths, the breakdown by race and ethnicity is as follows: White, 54.2%, Black 18.3%, Hispanic 20.2%, Asian 5.5% and other 1.8%. As the Governor stated, some of the deaths that we're reporting today occurred some time ago, with a few dating back to April. Of the 20 deaths we are reporting today, seven occurred over the past five days, 13 of the 20 new deaths occurred in the month of July. The remaining are from prior periods. The deaths we report are lab confirmed and death certificate verified. The timing of completion of the death certificates affects when these numbers are reported.

At the state veterans homes the numbers remain the same, and at our state psychiatric hospitals, the numbers also remain the same. The percent positivity as of July 13th in the state is 1.66%. The Northern part of the state reports 1.41%, the Central part of the state 1.38%, and the Southern part of the state 3.03%.

As the Governor shared, the RT or the rate of transmission has ticked up to 1.1. We have reached out to several of our counties to ascertain the reasons for the increases. Several of our counties have reported increases in new cases associated with parties of younger individuals. As I've reported in the past, the percent of younger individuals affected by COVID-19 has increased to 22% at the end of June, from a prior percentage of 12% in April. That concludes my daily update. Stay connected, stay safe, stay healthy, get tested, and mask up. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you. A quick question and then I want to underscore your last comment. The 53 cases of child inflammatory syndrome is a cumulative number.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yes.

Governor Phil Murphy: Right? So most of them have passed through the challenges and they're back on their feet, so still no fatalities.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: No.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank God. I want to underscore the last point. Just, as we spoke, and Pat and Judy and I speak with our team every day before we come out here. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I'm going to try and you'll send the back my way if you don't agree. There are areas right now that are of heightened concern, and tell me if you agree with this. One is young people having -- these are not, I mentioned graduations, I'm not talking about the ones on the football field. We have no evidence that that's leading to anything. We frankly have no evidence that the protests, the beach activity, the parks, or these graduations have led to anything, right? When we say graduation parties, we mean indoors, in people's houses. There's a lot of -- like, come on, folks don't do this. So that's one area.

Secondly, we had some long-term care flare ups and as you reminded me on the call, there are over 400 nursing homes in the state and we've seen little of that. And then the third one is folks coming in from either returning or visiting from hotspot states. Is that fair?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah.

Governor Phil Murphy: The long-term care, is this something that you're particularly concerned about? Obviously, we've been devastated in long-term care and I know the veterans homes have stayed, thank God after the devastation, particularly in Paramus and Menlo Park, have stayed steady, but.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: But we still have active outbreaks in long-term care and the Communicable Disease Service keeps a vigilant eye on all of them, and reports appropriately and at the end of the day, if there is an outbreak, I get a report. Thankfully, there's not that many, but we remain concerned.

Governor Phil Murphy: Nothing like it was in March and April, but it's still, so those are, I'm just, those are three particular specific areas, indoor, young persons having parties. Secondly, long-term care is not off the radar screen by any means, notwithstanding the devastation not just in our state, but in America, and frankly the world. And thirdly is New Jersey and returning from a hotspot state or visiting from one, right? Thank you.

Pat, we spoke not just about compliance on Wednesday, we also spoke about the big uptick in shootings, including sadly some that led to fatalities. Great to have you. Linda remains in our prayers. Any update on either of those fronts or any other matters?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you. Nothing really the last two nights, I'm glad to report, but I know we knock on wood a lot around here. There have not been any shootings across the state in the last two nights. We are, as I've mentioned on Wednesday, working with all of our partners at federal, state, county and local levels to make sure that we do everything possible to mitigate the violence that we've seen flare up over the past month. I know the Governor mentioned it, the Office of Emergency Management's also monitoring the heat. I think the heat index on Sunday is predicted to be 110, certainly along the I-95 corridor and urban areas, that gives us cause for concern. The Board of Public Utilities is certainly engaged with that as well, because of the draw on electric with air conditioning running. So the State Emergency Operations Center, as always, remains poised to monitor and respond if need be. We're just praying for a safe weekend, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: And, Pat, we've said it before, and we were talking about this earlier, there's a high correlation between oppressive heat and bad behavior. We've just got to plead with folks to not take that bait. Is that fair?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: That's fair to say that the heat, for the past several years, has had a direct correlation with violent crime. So again, when it's this hot, people want to be outside, especially, you know, gathering, social distancing in mind with their friends and community members, but then sometimes for violent, recidivist offenders offers opportunities for them to retaliate and to be violent. So we're certainly monitoring that as well, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Pat and thank you for all. We'll start with Daniel. But before we do, unless you hear otherwise, Dan Bryan is here, Matt Platkin, welcome. We'll be in our mode, as we have been of late, which is we'll be with you electronically tomorrow and Sunday, unless you hear otherwise, or there's a reason to be gathering and then we'll gather on Monday. We do not, at least as I left the office, do not have a time yet for the White House. So we'll be at one o'clock on Monday, unless you hear otherwise. We'll probably know that by the end of the day if there were if there is a VTC with the White House, and if so, if that impacts our time, is that fair? Okay. Thank you. Daniel, good afternoon.

Q&A Session

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Hi, Governor. These are all bonding questions. With the bonding, what's going to happen next exactly? How soon is the Treasury going to go out to market? And when do you see any of the money to come through? Do you still plan to go forward without even if say the court issues like a TRO or a permanent block of that?

With the money where is the most need? What exactly is hurting the most and what programs do you think this would make the most difference in? What appropriations for bonding have you done already with you and the Treasury and the Legislature, like, how ready are you to start, I guess going out to market or putting in an application with the Federal Reserve? Do you expect that you'd be revising the stopgap budget that you signed on June 30th? Would any of these items be -- would you un-deappropriate any of these items or would you pay any of the things that were going to be put off until October 1st?

And S&P said yesterday in a report that if --

Governor Phil Murphy: Daniel, do you have a PowerPoint presentation, or are you going to do this --

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: A couple, yeah.

Governor Phil Murphy: Let's try to bring this to a head, if you could. Thank you.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Okay. S&P sent out a report yesterday that if this doesn't hold up in court, there are a number of other short-term borrowing alternatives the administration could pursue. Are you looking at those as a backup if this does get struck down in court and if it's ruled unconstitutional?

Governor Phil Murphy: Is that it? Didn't mean to cut you off? I'll come back to, Matt Platkin may want to talk about the actual processes next. We're not going to have any comment about any legal matters, so I'm not going to answer anything related to that, hypothetical or otherwise. What's most needed? Everything. I mean, this is literally, I said, an unprecedented fiscal crisis, unprecedented as a big word. The only comparisons we have been able to make, the Great Depression, so that's beginning in 1929, and the Civil War. So it is across the board. I mentioned some of them earlier. It's healthcare, housing, education, frontline workers, it's the services that government delivers each and every day, and that is it.

I don't think there's anything I'm intending to do to revise what we had on June 30th. This, by the way, is not something that -- this has not happened like snapping fingers. This is going to be a many week process. We had guessed that it might take as much as 12 weeks to get all of this back to actually execute this plan, and so that brings us largely through the period if that's right, I hope it's faster, but it brings us largely through the period of the budget that we signed. Matt, anything you want to say in terms of the actual mechanics of next steps, etc.?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: No, Governor, I think you touched on it all. I mean, the bill that's now a law lays out a process for Treasury to deliver a report to a committee established by the Legislature. We would follow the process laid out in the bill. And obviously, with respect to any litigation, we have no comment.

Governor Phil Murphy: And again, I think we're not trying to cut off further, but that's literally where we are right now. And as this evolves, I promise you, we're going to be -- it took us longer than any of us wanted, but we ended up in a good place with the Legislature in terms of how we're going to go forward together, and a big hallmark of that will be transparency. As you know, I've got to deliver a budget at latest by August 25th for the period from October 1st to June 30th of 2021, so those deliberations are upon us. This is all, you'll be hearing more about all of this in the coming weeks. Thank you. Good to see you. Nikita, how are you?

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I'm well. Thank you, Governor. So several election officials, including some in your administration, have told us that if the state is going to hold a mostly vote by mail general election in November that they would need to know by August 1st to start sending out the nearly 6.2 million mail-in ballots that they have. So I'm wondering, do you have a timeline to make a decision about in-person voting for the general? Do you think that it's possible that in-person voting will be safe in November? And do you think that the Legislature should fast track early voting in time for this year's elections?

And then further, I know the New Jersey Guard was assisting in the July primaries in Monmouth County, some Guardsmen were seen counting votes. Could you outline exactly what their role is, or role was in the primary? And do you see any problems with the imagery of soldiers counting ballots?

And last one, I promise, the Democratic State Committee which you're the titular head of, will meet next week to elect its DNC members and to take additional delegates to the national convention. I just want to know if you would urge the state committee to have that process be open to both the media and the public?

Governor Phil Murphy: Again, based on what we have seen, the hybrid process that was employed in the July 7th primary, for the most part, and I'll obviously always caveat, there's always going to be some situation here or there, every one of which we take deadly seriously, for the most part was a successful exercise. I still can't give you a total turnout number. To me, turnout is a big metric in terms of turnout high, infections low would be good metrics of a successful hybrid process. We've made no decisions on the fall, on the November 3rd election. I don't have any reaction specifically to the August 1st date, but I think it's our collective judgment that the sooner we make that decision, the better, the longer the runway is. And I would say that's just as much for the vote by mail piece, if that's going to be a part of it, as it is for the in-person piece.

So one of the things we heard from clerks, and the Secretary of State and all of our teams are doing the after-action review of this. One of the things we heard is on the physical presence, that they would like as long a runway as possible. So it wasn't just a discussion in and around vote by mail, but it was also that objective to have 50% capacity per county and at least one location per municipality. And so to be determined, but I'm not sure as I said, I'm not sure August 1st has magic for us, but earlier than later does. And I'm not sure what the legislative piece of this would be. But obviously, if we make a decision that we think requires a statutory fix, obviously, as we always do, we'll work closely.

The National Guard was there in their, I don't know what the right word or phrase is. I'll turn to a guy in a uniform, in their civvies, I think they were in their civilian clothes, right? They were there as literally, for a simple reason. We were concerned about whether we'd have the proper capacity of poll workers, so they were there literally as a surge capacity. I've no concerns about that. Again, with a longer runway going into November, regardless of where we end up, you know, in a perfect world, you won't need to have folks there is a surge capacity, but as they have done in every role they have played from the beginning of this crisis, I take my hat off to the women and men of the National Guard. They've done an extraordinary job.

I don't have a real -- it's a good question on the Democratic State Committee. I haven't been asked it before. I'm not sure what the norm is, historically, honestly. But let me noodle on that and we'll come back to you. Again, when in doubt, we lean on the side of transparency. But again, I've got no experience as Governor with this process, and I take the question under advisement. Thank you.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I didn't hear you say whether or not you had a problem with the imagery of soldiers helping to count votes?

Governor Phil Murphy: I just answered it. Thank you. Sir, do you have anything? You're good?

Ian Elliott, NJTV News: Good afternoon, Governor. How much money in total has New Jersey gotten from federal stimulus bills and how much has the state spent? Care to comment on how much, why you haven't spent more of the \$2.4 billion in CARES Act funding? And will you ever make this information easily available to the public on a dashboard to provide transparency for this money?

Financial analysts want to know more about the borrowing plan and why not wait to see if New Jersey actually needs \$9.9 billion before authorizing it? And what are the specifics of how the state plans to pay it back? Over how long? Why not let voters decide in November if they want the state to borrow that much

money?

Finally, NJEA Leader Marie Blistan said schools don't have enough time to open in the fall, contrary to your plans. What's your reaction to that? And how involved was the NJEA in discussions before you made that decision?

Governor Phil Murphy: How much total we've gotten? I assume you mean not just CARES Act money, but Health and Human Services and others. I don't have a total but we can get that for you. Do you have it, Matt? I know the CARES Act, the number we use is \$2.4 billion.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, the Coronavirus Relief Fund was \$2.4 billion, but there's various pots. Part of the Governor's order that he signed today is the creation of a website laying out the spending plan, so that is coming. It's something he announced today.

Governor Phil Murphy: The extent to which money has been spent is overwhelmingly due to, and Matt will correct me if I'm wrong here, still needing guidance from the feds on how we can spend it. Is that fair to say?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, across all of this, all federal money comes with very strict regulations and there's approval processes, including the money that the Health Department's working on for testing. So depending on the pot of money, we're subject to various forms of guidance. Plus this money, we don't know if additional federal money is coming yet, so Treasury has budgeted and worked with the Legislature to come up with a plan as to how to spend this money over the coming months, some of which we've announced and some of which, you know, we'll be announcing going forward. But there's a plan to spend it all, it's just something that we need to ensure that we're complying with all federal rules and regulations. And again, that goes to the Governor's order that he announced.

Governor Phil Murphy: And again, these are different buckets. Some of this is very clear on testing capacity and testing materials, very clear on FEMA-related things. There's a cost share, etc. Matt also mentioned something which I meant to mention, I think actually in Daniel's question. We've said this is not either/or but it's, at the moment, it's bonding and nothing at the moment from the feds prospectively. We are still hopeful, but we don't have any sense of where that's going to come out. And clearly, the more robust that response is, the better it is for us. Not in lieu of being able to borrow money to invest in the services that our residents need, but certainly in addition to.

I think we've already answered the question on your, are you going to make this information public? I just made that announcement today. Listen, you want to get -- and this is I think a very good result we ended up with the Legislature. We want the ability to borrow up to, none of us wake up wanting to borrow at all, if not borrow all of that unless we have to, but we want to have maximum. Again, this is a historically unprecedented fiscal crisis unlike, again, Great Depression, civil war. We need to have as much ability at our disposal.

Plans to pay it back, TBD. I mean look, let's get through the first part of this. Why not let it go to voters? We'll be broke by November 3rd, and then you've got to add 12 weeks or whatever it's going to take beyond that. We have no choice, and that's not a decision you take lightly. Again, historically, fiscal impact historically unprecedented.

I had an exchange with Marie this morning. Listen, we take all constituents in this process of getting back to school deadly seriously. We mostly look at this through the eyes of our kids. What's right for them to keep them healthy, to keep their mental health strong, to make sure that they get the public education they deserve? We're number one in the country. And by the way, a lot of that is due to not only great kids, but great educators. And listen, right now we put out, the Department of Education with a heavy dose of input from Judy and her team at the Department of Health have put out the broad parameters of what we want districts to consider.

And just as when we closed, each of the districts submitted a plan under the theory that no two districts are alike. We're asking the same as we reopen. What is it going to look like? And the districts, I believe, have to submit that plan four weeks before whenever the go date is, and also make that public. We've laid out

strongly held principles and parameters. It's up to the districts now to come back to us and to their constituents, to their kids most importantly, to the parents, the educators, the administrators, and to us with their plans.

I was really happy yesterday to make the announcement we made, so no matter what a given district's plan looks like, whether it's all in, whether it's hybrid, no matter what it may look like, the digital divide was a bone in our throat in this state; frankly, in this country. And I was incredibly honored to be in Irvington yesterday and make the announcement with the Senate President, Senator Ruiz, who is the Chair of the Senate Education Committee, Kevin Dehmer, who's our Acting Commissioner. April Voss who's the Superintendent in Irvington and Mayor Tony Voss and many others to make the announcement that we had pulled together the resources and also plead to philanthropic and corporate folks to once and forever and always eliminate the digital divide. To not just get devices to every kid, but to give them the internet connectivity that they will need.

And so no matter what a given district's, I say that because no matter what a given district's reopening plan looks like, having that in our pocket is a game changer. You'll remember, this feels like it was in the 1950s but it was in mid-March the three of us were up here every day talking about why don't we wait another couple of days? It was to make sure, in particular, that we signed off on the districts' plans. And remember, many districts closed before we ultimately pulled the garage door down and mandated that, and that was with our blessing. But the hot, reliable meal that too many of our kids have the school to rely on, and to make sure Pat, I remember early days, that was topic number one, and the digital divide and the lack of access to devices and what the workarounds were.

And so in any event, it's a long-winded way of saying we understand the passions on all sides of this. We're working morning, noon and night ourselves. I know the districts are. I've got a meeting later on this afternoon on this very topic and as we've got things to report, I promise you, we'll get to you. Thank you. Brent, good afternoon.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Good afternoon.

Governor Phil Murphy: Brent, I can't tell. Is that a Mets mask?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: It is. Tomorrow they play an exhibition game against the Yankees, so.

Governor Phil Murphy: Where's it gonna be?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: One of them, they're playing two this week and one's at Yankee, the other in Central, so.

Governor Phil Murphy: One home and away, okay.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: Then we're a week from today from baseball, so.

Governor Phil Murphy: Are you playing or no?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: I am not. I lost that dream a long time ago. You reported 844 people in hospitals here, but the dashboard says 868. I just wanted to know which number is right? People keep asking us when gyms will reopen. Anything new on that? When do you think we'll see more reopenings in general? What data do you need to see for that to happen? Like what does the rate of transmission have to be?

And then a bit back on -- this is from Carly Sitrin of Politico, the NJEA president, you know, said it's possible schools can't reopen in person by September. Do you, based on that, do you at all plan to move back the opening or should districts expect updated guidance? And if so, when can they expect that change? And are you comfortable with sending your children back to school today, based on all that's been going on?

Governor Phil Murphy: It's 844, I believe Judy, right? It's 844, so that maybe just, that may be a layover from yesterday, although yesterday it looked like it was 835. But we'll come back to if it's otherwise. No news on gyms and by the way, the overwhelming amount of the folks who own these gyms have been incredibly good, and who could blame their frustration? They've been crushed. That's another reason why being able to get that federal cash, for instance, for small businesses is a game changer. Really nothing new on the reopening

stuff. I mean, we're largely in a holding pattern. We're likely going to go ahead with, we allow another level of outdoor sports to kick in, the high contact stuff. I think on Monday, Matt, is that right? We're likely to go ahead and let that happen. Again, it's outdoors.

The data that we need to look at, and remember these are rolling averages. I think we need to see, and Judy or Tina, tell me if you disagree, it's not just the spot positivity. It is spot positivity, rate of transmission, the fresh data, the new hospitalizations. It's also, we cannot ignore the world around us. I mentioned Pennsylvania has pulled back. We got a lot of grief about, you know, restaurants in Lambertville. People going over to Bucks County. Well guess what? They just pulled back. We cannot ignore the world around us. And I mentioned earlier, a lot of this is on us and a lot of it is on fires dying down elsewhere in the country. I was going to say the world, but no one's traveling to the world these days.

But you know, we've got to feel like -- and we need, we have nothing but prayers and high aspirations for these places, these other states to get a hold of this because it's not just killing people there. It has the potential of killing people here. But I would just gratuitously say if you don't like our leadership here, why don't you go down to Georgia and see how that feels? I mean, we need responsible leadership in this country right now, in every place. I know there are folks, both sides of the aisle, throwing themselves and doing everything they can right now. We need that consistently. We need national strategies on things like face coverings. We need leadership to be responsible and doing the right things. I mean, my God, suing communities that require face coverings. I mean, it's unfathomable. It's unfathomable.

And so I would just say, it's not just the data in our state but we cannot ignore the world around us. Believe me, I want to get to gyms. I want to get to indoor dining. I want to get to theaters. I know Judy, Pat, Tina, we all do, but we can't do it if we think we're going to have a likelihood of killing people and that's where we are.

Nothing new on, I think I've given the answer on NJEA and again, I'm a huge fan of Marie's, but I've already gone through that. I've said everything I could say on that. I just wrote the word comfortable for your last question, but I don't know what that means.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: I think your answer was on the radio the other day. Are you comfortable sending your kids? I know you still have some in, at least one in high school? Are you comfortable sending them back now?

Governor Phil Murphy: Based on what I know, the answer is yes. We know for sure what the plan looks like for our two in college. I have less visibility right now to our guy who's going to be a senior in high school. But yeah, I think in their specific cases, I think the institutions have handled themselves really well. Thank you. Charlie, how are you?

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Good, thank you, Governor. What would you say to the parents and students of the Lincoln Annex School in New Brunswick who are concerned about the plan to close that school? What's the best way for them to voice their concerns to your administration? Would you and your Acting Education Commissioner consider meeting with them to hear them out?

In May, you said, quote, "It's par for the course that you're not supposed to have another source of income." When referring to members of your administration. Are your county school superintendents also expected to work full time, or are they exempt from that rule? I believe at least one of them has listed a side job on their financial disclosure forms.

Regarding online voter registration, I know that it was supposed to be ready by this month, but you signed an executive order relaxing that deadline. Are you confident that it'll be ready in advance of the general election? When do you think that might go online?

And finally, Rutgers University still wants full tuition from its students, even though they're going to be mostly remote for the fall semester. They've offered a \$300 discount on the student fees, but many of the students are not satisfied with that. Do you think public universities and colleges should be charging full tuition in light of the remote approach?

Governor Phil Murphy: I have literally nothing new in the Lincoln School. I know it's a question or a cause of great interest to you, and I'm sure to the families associated with it. I want to repeat for the record that Judy is a graduate of that school. I will ask Dan Bryan to follow up on that, if I could.

I don't have any specific answer on county school superintendents. It is not, and Matt, correct me if I'm wrong here, it is not that you can't have another source, it's that you can't have another source that you didn't disclose and that was approved by an ethics process. Is that accurate? I have no idea if it's different on county superintendents. Someone will come back to you.

Online voter registration, Matt, I assume we think we'll have that in time?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: I have to defer to the State Department, we can get a follow up.

Governor Phil Murphy: We'll come back to the Department of State, if that's all right. I just did an interview with a Rutgers organization, so I don't have a specific response on the tuition front. I can see the argument on both sides of it. On the one side, you say you're not getting the experience that we normally have or used to have. And on the other side, you've not only got enormous financial strains on institutions like that, but also you still have a lot of stuff you have to do and you're trying like heck to deliver the best educational product possible. I don't have a passionate view, but I can understand arguments on both sides of it. We'll come back to you on the other topics.

I've got preliminary word just now that the White House is at 4:00 on Monday. That is preliminary, so if that is true, let me just check that. If that is true, then we will be indeed with you at 1:00 p.m. on Monday. Dan, you will commit to letting people know of if that turns out to be otherwise, right? Thank you for that.

Shall we mask up? Pat's already beaten us. Thank you all, Judy and Tina. Thank you, Pat, Jared, Matt, Dan, the whole team, other Matt. A couple things very briefly. Again, thank you, thank you folks by the millions for doing the right thing. You've been extraordinary. We just need you to stay at it. I know that's not -- listen I'm not wild about covering my face either in case anyone wants to know. It's something that we're not used to doing. And so the folks who are doing it in overwhelming numbers now, still not where we need to be but in overwhelming numbers, we take a particular tip of the cap to you all. Please keep it up.

And it's going to be, as my late aunt would say, it's going to be hotter than Hades this weekend and so we need you to be particularly careful, both in just public safety generally but specifically, be careful on social distancing, face coverings, washing your hands with soap and water, doing the right thing. My guess is that our shore and lakes and parks will be crowded. We didn't talk about it, but one of the parks in Morris County is going to be closed for a couple of weeks there. They blamed it largely on out-of-staters. We didn't mention that earlier, but let's do the right things, folks. I know you can, I know you will, because you have been doing it.

Judy, thank you in particular, it's not an app, it's a device, it's a place that you can sort of weigh in and I think that's going to add to our -- you know, this is anecdotal. And again, we take no joy in this, but it's a fact. The evidence is overwhelming. Never mind that people are doing a responsible job when they return to New Jersey, but a lot of folks aren't leaving New Jersey. They've put off whatever travel to these states that they were otherwise going to go to. And again, that doesn't bring you any joy, it doesn't bring me any joy saying it but the fact of the matter is, in this incredibly unprecedented time, that's probably the right move. It allows us to enjoy together the uniqueness, the beauty, the gem that is New Jersey. God bless you all. Thank you.

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