

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Surpasses 200 Total Grants of Clemency with Fourth Round of Clemency Actions

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**PRINCETON** – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his fourth round of clemency actions under his Administration’s historic initiative granting life-changing opportunities to individuals involved in the justice system. In this latest round, Governor Murphy exercised his executive authority, granting 19 commutations and 29 pardons, bringing the cumulative total to 217 grants of clemency over the past 16 months. This milestone advances New Jersey’s reputation as The State for Second Chances, built under Governor Murphy’s leadership.

“As Governor, one of the greatest responsibilities I hold is the ability to extend second chances to individuals who have made a commitment to rehabilitating their lives,” **said Governor Murphy**. “With this fourth round of clemency actions, we uphold one of our nation’s oldest and most fundamental principles: justice for all. I owe deep gratitude to the members of our Clemency Advisory Board who have been working around-the-clock to thoroughly screen and review each applicants case, ensuring they meet the criteria of Executive Order No. 362. Together, we are creating opportunities for those who have made mistakes in the past to heal, and ultimately, contribute to our shared future.”

“Our state continues to lead with courage and compassion – ensuring that justice includes not just accountability, but also the chance to rebuild and contribute to society,” **said Lt. Governor Tahesha Way**. “I am proud of this historic effort that our administration has advanced, changing the lives of over 200 families.”

[In June 2024 \(https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240619a.shtml\)](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240619a.shtml), Governor Murphy signed

[Executive Order No. 362](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20241216/62/34/eb/61/de22d48e34256866c3ec3042/EO-362.pdf)

[\(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20241216/62/34/eb/61/de22d48e34256866c3ec3042/EO-362.pdf\)](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20241216/62/34/eb/61/de22d48e34256866c3ec3042/EO-362.pdf)

, establishing the state’s first-ever Clemency Advisory Board. The Board reviews applications for pardons and commutations and provides recommendations to the Governor on executive clemency actions. Under the Order, certain categories of applications receive expedited consideration, including non-violent offenses with long post-conviction periods of good conduct, victims of domestic violence who committed crimes in their victimization, or sentences reflecting excessive trial penalties. The process also incorporates robust victim outreach, ensuring that the perspectives of individuals harmed by crime are heard and addressed as part of a fair, transparent system.

“With this fourth round of clemency, Governor Murphy once again demonstrates that mercy is not weakness—it is moral strength in action,” **said Bishop Joshua Rodriguez, Chair of the New Jersey Clemency Advisory Board**. “By extending close to fifty pardons and commutations, the Governor reaffirms that redemption is a cornerstone of true justice. Each restored life represents renewed hope for families, neighborhoods, and the future of our state. New

Jersey continues to lead the nation in showing that second chances can heal communities and restore faith in our justice system. I commend Governor Murphy for his unwavering commitment to fairness, compassion, and the transformative power of grace.”

The following individuals have been granted a pardon:

1. **Alston, Sheila:** aggravated assault and endangering the welfare of a child, sentenced in 2008
2. **Arias, Jr., Dolphin:** possession of a prohibited weapon, sentenced in 1994
3. **Barrow, Jeanette:** possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and aggravated assault, sentenced in 1988; endangering the welfare of a child, sentenced in 1995
4. **S.B.:** distribution of a controlled dangerous substance (two counts), sentenced in 2006
5. **Bosseler Devlin, Mary Jane:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance (two counts), sentenced in 1985; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1995
6. **Breland, Greg:** possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance and distribution of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, sentenced in 1991; simple assault, sentenced in 1995; possession of a controlled dangerous substance sentenced in 2001; possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2001; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, sentenced in 2001
7. **Brockington, Tyrone:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, sentenced in 1995; possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1995
8. **Burke, Kareem:** distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2004
9. **Ciroalo, Jr., Eugene:** arson, sentenced in 1987
10. **Fisher, Patricia:** conspiracy to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2010
11. **Gentile, Philip:** bad checks, sentenced in 2007; possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2007
12. **Hellriegel, Lisa:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone and distribution of a controlled dangerous substance near a public facility, sentenced in 2007
13. **Holness, Robert:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1998; receiving stolen property, sentenced in 1999; simple assault, sentenced in 2000; theft by unlawful taking, sentenced in 2000; receiving stolen property, sentenced in 2001
14. **Ishak, Yousef:** possession of paraphernalia, 1988; violation of probation, 1988; receiving stolen property, 1989; possession of a controlled dangerous substance, 1992; shoplifting, 1997; shoplifting, 1997; receiving stolen property, 1998; possession of paraphernalia, 1998
15. **Josephs, Sr., Gary:** credit card theft and possession of a weapon, sentenced in 1990
16. **Kouliev, Alim:** local ordinance violations, 1996; failure to disperse, 1996; possession of a controlled dangerous substance and possession of paraphernalia, 1998
17. **McAnuff, Raymond:** distribution of a controlled dangerous substance within a school zone, possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, and possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1993
18. **Melgarejo, Angel:** false documentation, sentenced in 2007
19. **Montilla, Jomarlin:** theft, sentenced in 2005
20. **Musero, Nick:** conspiracy to cause arson, sentenced in 1998
21. **Polite, Ernest:** shoplifting sentenced in 1975; theft, sentenced in 1982; burglary, sentenced in 1983; violation of probation, sentenced in 1986; lewdness, sentenced in 1998
22. **Pozo, Odalys:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, sentenced in 1995
23. **Ramirez-Perez, Frank de Los Mercedes:** two counts of possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, 1994
24. **Restrepo, Carlos:** conspiracy to possess a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1991
25. **Smith, Tawanda:** distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, possession of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, and possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1996;

possession of a controlled dangerous substance and distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1996

26. **Sullivan, Eugene:** possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1981; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1986; violation of probation, sentenced in 1987; violation of probation, sentenced in 1988; conspiracy to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1988; violation of probation, sentenced in 1992
27. **Thompson, Brenda:** theft, sentenced in 2000; possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2002; local ordinance violation, sentenced in 2002; shoplifting, sentenced in 2003; wandering to obtain a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2008
28. **Whitson, Doug:** unlawful possession of a weapon, sentenced in 1992; possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1993; conspiracy to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1994
29. **Williamson, Janice:** loitering to obtain a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2007; conspiracy to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2008

The following individuals have been granted commutations of their prison or parole sentences:

1. **Baker, Latasha:** Convicted of murder, robbery, conspiracy, and hindering. Sentenced in 2014 to a term of incarceration of 18 months consecutive to a term of 45 years with over 38 years of parole ineligibility. Ms. Baker will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
2. **Carter, Rashawn:** Convicted of felony murder, robbery (five counts), criminal restraint (five counts), and conspiracy. Sentenced in 2015 to a term of incarceration of 107 years with 87 years of parole ineligibility. Mr. Carter will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
3. **Neals, Tivon:** Convicted of murder, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon, and terroristic threats. Sentenced in 2005 to a term of incarceration of 4 years consecutive to a term of 50 years with 42.5 years of parole ineligibility. Mr. Neals will have his sentenced commuted to an aggregate term of incarceration of 30 years with a parole ineligibility term to be satisfied on November 10, 2025. Upon release from incarceration, Mr. Neals will begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
4. **Yates, Nathan:** Convicted of robbery, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon, possession of a prohibited weapon, resisting arrest, and certain persons not to have a weapon. Convicted in 2005 to a term of incarceration of 33 years. Mr. Yates will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
5. **Harris, Timothy:** Convicted of felony murder, murder, robbery (two counts), conspiracy, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 1993 to a term of incarceration of life with 30 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Harris will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
6. **Leahey, Anthony:** Convicted of murder (three counts), possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 2001 to a term of incarceration of 30 years with 30 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Leahey will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
7. **Johnson, Charles:** Convicted of felony murder, robbery, theft, receiving stolen property, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 2003 to a term of incarceration of 52 years with over 44 years of parole ineligibility. Mr. Johnson will have his sentenced commuted to a term of incarceration of 25 years with 25 years parole ineligibility, and he will have a five-year period of parole supervision.
8. **Holmes, Stanley:** Convicted of armed robbery (two counts), burglary, and kidnapping (two counts). Sentenced in 2005 to a term of incarceration of 35 years. Mr. Holmes will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
9. **Sears, Lacianna:** Convicted of aggravated manslaughter. Sentenced in 2019 to a term of incarceration of 22 years with 18.5 years of parole ineligibility. Ms. Sears will have her sentenced commuted to a term of incarceration of 10 years with 10 years of parole ineligibility, and she will have a five-year period of parole supervision.

10. **Freeman, Karla:** Convicted of felony murder and attempted robbery. Sentenced in 2007 to a term of incarceration of 30 years with 30 years parole ineligibility. Ms. Freeman will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
11. **Moore, Sammy:** Convicted of felony murder, murder, attempted murder, robbery (two counts), and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, sentenced in March 1995. Convicted of conspiracy, attempted burglary, and burglar's tools, sentenced in June 1995. Mr. Moore was sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of life with 40 years of parole ineligibility. He will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
12. **McGraw, Ronald:** Convicted of conspiracy, murder, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 2006 to a term of incarceration of 50 years with 42.5 years parole ineligibility. Mr. McGraw will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
13. **Williams, Gregory:** Convicted of robbery (two counts), possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 2012 to a term of imprisonment of 42 years with 35 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Williams will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
14. **McCrimmon, Rasool:** Convicted of murder, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon, sentenced in 2007. Convicted of aggravated manslaughter, convicted in 2010. Mr. McCrimmon was sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of 50 years with 42.5 years of parole ineligibility. He will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
15. **Alexander, Shadee:** Convicted of conspiracy, robbery, receiving stolen property, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 2009 to a term of imprisonment of 30 years with 25.5 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Alexander will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
16. **Wallace, Jamie:** Convicted of robbery (three counts) and resisting arrest (two counts). Sentenced in 2009 to a term of imprisonment of life without parole. Mr. Wallace will be released from prison and begin a five-year period of parole supervision.
17. **Bass, Calvin:** Convicted of felony murder (two counts), burglary, robbery, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 1984 to a term of incarceration of life with 30 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Bass was released from incarceration in June 2021 onto parole after serving 38 years. He will be released from his parole supervision in June 2026.
18. **Williams, Willie:** Convicted of murder. Sentenced in 1982 to a term of incarceration of life with 25 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Williams was released from incarceration in May 2013 onto parole after serving 36 years. He will be released from his parole supervision immediately.
19. **Venable, Damon:** Convicted of murder, robbery, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and unlawful possession of a weapon. Sentenced in 1987 to a term of incarceration of life with 30 years parole ineligibility. Mr. Venable was released from incarceration in May 2021 onto parole after serving 34 years. He will be released from his parole supervision in May 2026.

Today's announcement took place at Princeton University where, during the 2024-2025 academic year, over 50 students, both graduate and undergraduate, volunteered to participate in the Princeton Clemency Project sponsored by the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). The project, supervised by former New Jersey Public Defender and current SPIA Faculty Fellow Joe Krakora, helped prepare applications for 32 current and former State prisoners filing petitions for Executive Clemency under Governor Murphy's initiative. The students interviewed these applicants and their family members, reviewed extensive case documents, and, ultimately, prepared legal memoranda advocating for their clemency. The applicants were referred to the Princeton Clemency Project by the Office of the Public Defender and the ACLU-NJ and were eligible for expedited consideration under the Governor's Order. Two of the individuals that the class examined are receiving the extraordinary relief of clemency today.

"I am proud to welcome Governor Murphy, along with State officials and advocates, to the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs for today's special clemency announcement event," **Amaney A. Jamal, Ph.D., Dean,**

**Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.** “Last year, we were honored to welcome Princeton graduate Joe Krakora, the former Public Defender of New Jersey, as the SPIA in New Jersey faculty fellow. Under Joe’s leadership, we partnered with the ACLU of New Jersey and the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender on the Princeton Clemency Project, through which more than 50 students spent the 2024-2025 academic year building the strongest possible arguments for individuals who met the clemency criteria outlined in the Governor’s Executive Order. We are proud that Princeton SPIA has played a role in this worthy effort and grateful to Joe for his continued leadership in advancing justice-centered policy work.”

During today’s announcement, Jamal Muhammad, one of the six individuals who received a commutation in April 2025, shared the strides he’s taken since being released.

“I want to sincerely thank Governor Murphy and everyone who showed the compassion and courage to bring my freedom to fruition,” **said Jamal Muhammad.** “Life in freedom has been full of blessings – I’ve gotten married, started teaching, and launched my own business. To me, freedom means having the ability and opportunity to fulfill your goals and give back to your community. I thank God for this mercy and thank all of you for being part of this moment.”

Jamal Muhammad was incarcerated for over 28 years following an incident where his co-defendant shot and killed a victim during a robbery. During his time incarcerated, Muhammad became passionate about ethics and religious studies. He recently finished writing a book about anti-bullying, *Character Education: The Solution to Bullying*. He credits religion with transforming his decision-making and mindset. Muhammad is also a proud and loving father and is newly married. Despite being incarcerated for nearly all of their lives, he maintains a close relationship with his two children. He has even co-authored an online book with his son, enabling them to collaboratively write chapters together and remain connected.

Brenda Thompson, one of the 29 individuals who received a pardon today, spoke about her experiences post-incarceration, including the work she has done since leaving prison to help those in recovery.

Brenda Thompson was convicted of drug and minor property crimes from 2000-2006. These offenses were connected to her substance use. Thompson, a certified peer recovery specialist, currently works for the Center for Family Services. She is passionate about recovery and access to treatment, recognizing that she wouldn’t have her current life without recovery. Thompson maintains participation in 12-step programming and weekly meetings.

“I am thankful to Governor Phil Murphy and the State of New Jersey for granting me the opportunity and providing the resources that made my journey toward clemency possible. Your belief in rehabilitation and second chances has opened a new chapter in my life – one filled with hope, responsibility, and purpose,” **said Brenda Thompson.** “This clemency represents more than a pardon – it represents restoration, redemption, and renewed purpose. I am committed to using this second chance to serve others. I will continue to work diligently in the field of recovery, in all its aspects – especially Substance Abuse – helping those who are still fighting their battles to find hope, healing, and freedom.”

For more information on Governor Murphy’s Clemency Initiative or to apply for Executive Clemency, please visit [www.nj.gov/clemency/](https://www.nj.gov/clemency/) (<https://www.nj.gov/clemency/>).

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