

Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy Signs Legislation on January 8th, 2024

01/8/2024

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Gov. Phil Murphy on Monday signed four new laws during private ceremonies at his desk, surrounded by lawmakers and advocates, in his office at the Statehouse in Trenton.

While some measures are signing during elaborate public events, these “desk signings” were smaller affairs. Murphy said his administration chose seven to highlight – three last week, four Monday – out of more than 100 bills he has recently chosen to sign. The governor likened it to “speed dating,” with the four ceremonies held one after the other Monday morning.

The first law (S2764) establishes a pilot program in the state Department of Education to help military veterans obtain teacher certificates. Murphy said this is another step to help address a shortage of teachers in New Jersey.

“This will be a game-changer to get veterans into the teaching profession,” he said. “Nursing and teacher are the professions right now we’re the lightest on.”

The second law (A4052) creates a three-year pilot program in the state to combat sickle cell disease. It appropriates \$10.2 million in taxpayer money for the state departments of health and human services to select federally qualified health centers to develop sickle cell disease treatment programs and services.

“This is something, in my humble opinion, we ought to be making it as a permanent reality in the state,” Murphy said, noting the law falls in “the category of better late than never.”

The third law (S3957) allows more supplies used for harm reduction to be exempt from drug paraphernalia laws in the state.

“We could not continue the harm reduction endeavors we have quite successfully pursued with a definition of drug paraphernalia,” Murphy said.

He also said this “establishes flexibility so we don’t have to do this again” if there’s a new innovation in harm reductions.

“We know harm reduction works,” Murphy said. This will only allow us to be more effective.”

The fourth law (S1438) which allows unions in the state to file wage claim lawsuits on behalf of workers regardless of their union affiliation.

“If you see bad behavior on the workplace of a contractor or subcontractor, you could stand up on behalf of everybody and call foul,” Murphy said.

He also signed a statement acknowledging this does not break federal law.

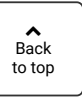
Murphy said “very few states do this” and called it “another step we’re taking in the whole category of fairness” – “underscoring we remain the quintessential organized labor state.”

The following people received pens Murphy used at the ceremonies:

First law

Brigadier General Dr. Lisa Hou, Adjutant General and Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education



Sen. Troy Singleton

Assemblywoman Shama Haider

Assemblyman Raj Mukherji

Luddie Austin, Retired Sergeant First Class of U.S. Army; Retired Police Sergeant of Trenton Police Department

Second law

Brandon McKoy, President, The Fund for New Jersey

Dr. Kaitlan Baston, Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)

Sen. Shirley Turner

Sen. Andrew Zwicker

Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson

Assemblyman Herb Conaway

Assemblyman Raj Mukherji

Assemblywoman Linda Carter

Third law

Caitlin O'Neill, Drug User Health & Liberation Strategist, New Jersey Harm Reduction Coalition

Dr. Kaitlan Baston, Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health

State Attorney General Matthew Platkin

Assemblyman Herb Conaway

Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer

Assemblywoman Shanique Speight

Fourth law

Bernard Callegari, Chief of Staff, Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Eastern Region

Anthony Abrantes, Assistant Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Eastern Atlantic State Regional Council of Carpenters

Sen. Troy Singleton

Assemblywoman Annette Quijano

Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli

Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Brent Johnson, NJ.COM

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Rich Hundley, New Jersey Governor's Office

Governor Phil Murphy

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