

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Leaders Applaud Governor Murphy's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal

02/25/2021

"Thank you to Governor Murphy for a budget proposal that recognizes the critical role of our healthcare infrastructure and healthcare heroes in both responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and leading the way back," said **New Jersey Hospital Association President and CEO Cathy Bennett**. "As we enter the second year of this pandemic, we know the steep financial costs for healthcare facilities as they cared for a surge of patients, incurring the dual impact of skyrocketing expenses and plunging revenue. Increasing Charity Care funding and continuing to fund our Regional Coordinator Hospitals is a strong statement of support in recognizing these challenges."

"We applaud Gov. Murphy's strong, progressive budget. It prioritizes support for students, helps New Jersey families and keeps the state made to the educators who make our schools the best in the nation. In a time of unprecedented challenges, this budget points to a brighter future for our children and for all New Jersey residents," said **New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) President Marie Blistan, Vice President Sean M. Spiller, and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty**. "Gov. Murphy's commitment to funding schools has paid dividends already, and this budget continues that commitment by investing an additional \$700 million to help our students succeed. From investing in early childhood education, to closing the digital divide, to making higher education more accessible and more affordable to more families, this budget is a boon to our state and will keep us strong and competitive as we rebuild and move forward from the pandemic. Millions of families who choose New Jersey as a great place to raise children will reap the benefits. We are also pleased to see Gov. Murphy and the Legislature working together to fix the pension crisis created by their predecessors over many years. For the first time in more than a quarter of a century, New Jersey will contribute the full amount it owes to the pension system, achieving that milestone a year ahead of schedule. That is a display of true leadership and fiscal responsibility on the part of our elected leaders that will yield huge savings to taxpayers for years to come. It is certainly welcome news to public employees, who have made their full required contributions every one of those 25 years and who deserve the pensions they have earned through their careers of service to our state. This budget helps New Jersey keep building toward a stronger, fairer future for everyone."

"With a strong revenue forecast on the horizon, we are now beginning to see the benefits of the sound fiscal policy decisions we've made over the last three budget cycles," said **Assembly Appropriations Committee Chair Assemblyman John Burzichelli**. "Continued funding for property tax relief programs, the addition of the \$500 Middle Class Rebate, and a full payment made to the state's pension system will go a long way toward rebuilding financial resiliency for New Jersey seniors and families. This fiscal budget cycle is focused on recovery as well as fueling economic growth throughout the state. Creating jobs for residents and increasing support for small businesses that have been greatly impacted this year will be critical as we move forward and regain a sense of normalcy. The real truth is that the people of New Jersey need a lifeline after enduring the pandemic this past year. The Governor's proposal covers all the right priorities. Now, the legislature will get to weigh in and do our part to ensure the state stays on the right fiscal track."

"The Governor's proposed budget includes things to be encouraged by: the State's revenues are strong and positive revenue is expected going forward; the proposal does not include any new taxes or increased fees; and focus is placed on property tax relief including the funding of the Homestead Rebate and Senior Freeze Programs as well as increasing aid to our schools," said **Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. "I am also encouraged the budget proposal includes funding of the middle-class tax rebate which will provide relief to roughly 760,000 New Jersey families; recognizes the need to support New Jersey businesses; and fully funds the State's pension obligations for the first time in 25 years – achieving a 10-year goal one year early, honoring the State's commitment to our current and past workforce and demonstrating sound fiscal policy. I look forward to a thorough and robust review of the proposed budget's spending and to looking for ways to achieve savings and reduce debt reliance as it moves through the Assembly Budget Committee."

"The Governor's budget takes important steps in the right direction to restore some of the clean energy funds and to increase staffing at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection," said **Campaign Director for the NJ Conservation Foundation and Rethink Energy NJ Tom Gilbert**. "Investing in clean energy and our environment is a smart way to create much-needed jobs and improve the health of our communities."

The Governor's announcement that revenues from our State Sales, Income and Corporation Business taxes are outperforming expectations is certainly welcome news. It is now incumbent upon the Legislature to ensure we responsibly prioritize how we fund programs that are critical to our State's nine million residents as we seek to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald**. "Job creation and developing a pathway for our children to safely return to the classroom is paramount to getting back to a state of normalcy. We must do all we can with the resources we have to ensure we put our friends and neighbors back to work as we strive to boost our economy and protect families in need. I am particularly pleased that the Governor's proposal includes full funding for the Senior Freeze and Homestead Rebate property tax programs. These initiatives are crucial and should be embraced across party lines. I look forward to working with my colleagues over the next several months to craft a fair, responsible and thoughtful State budget that reflects our shared priorities and our goal for a prosperous New Jersey today and in the years to come."

"The lack of tax increases in the proposed budget combined with the Governor's plan to get residents back to work is exactly what residents need to recover from the financial challenges of this past year. New Jersey families need our help now more than ever, and they will receive it," said **Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore Gordon Johnson**. "Support for Main Streets and small businesses that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic will also be critical to ensuring working and middle-class families can thrive once again. We must take the interconnected nature of businesses and communities into consideration when providing assistance to various sectors of our economy. I am pleased that several revenue sources are performing better than we had initially anticipated. This will give us a greater ability to fund the programs our residents rely on for quality education, affordable housing and other critical services. I look forward to working with my colleagues to craft a fiscally responsible and socially-aware budget on behalf of residents throughout our state."

"After a year of unprecedented challenges, it is encouraging to hear in his budget address the Governor's commitment to smart growth values such as inclusive neighborhoods with affordable housing options, investments in transit without fare hikes, and critical upgrades to water and broadband infrastructure," said **New Jersey Future Executive Director Peter Kasabach**. "Building and supporting strong neighborhoods and communities for

everyone, as with the expanded Main Street program and new redevelopment and revitalization subsidies in the form of incentives, is essential for an economic comeback that makes New Jersey stronger and more equitable than before.”

“We applaud Governor Murphy’s proposal to eliminate the age cap on New Jersey’s Earned Income Tax Credit program (EITC). EITC is one of the most effective anti-poverty programs in the state. Currently, the program is not available to workers over the age of 64 – despite our workforce getting older, working longer, and workers 65-plus are the fastest growing labor pool. Under the Governor’s proposal, all older workers, regardless of their age, will benefit from the NJ EITC and the increased financial security it provides,” **said AARP New Jersey Director of Advocacy Evelyn Liebman**. “Financial security in retirement is a core component of AARP’s mission to enhance the quality of life for all as we age, including for generations to come. AARP fights at both the federal and state level to ensure that all workers who have paid into their public pension systems over a lifetime of hard work have the economic security that their pensions afford in retirement. AARP applauds Governor Murphy’s proposal to fully fund the public pension system, the first time since 1996. Full funding is important to ensure the financial security of hundreds of thousands of public sector workers and their families and improve the overall health of the system. For the 1.7 million private sector workers who don’t have a way to save for retirement at work, we look forward to working with the Administration to stand up the New Jersey Secure Choice Savings Program. In 2019, Governor Murphy enacted Secure Choice, which is a public-private partnership that will allow many hardworking New Jerseyans to have a retirement savings option that puts them in control of their futures. Under the statute, the program is set to open its doors in March 2022. New Jerseyans, particularly older residents and those with disabilities living on low-, moderate- and fixed-incomes, have always struggled with New Jersey’s high property taxes. We commend Governor Murphy’s proposal to fund New Jersey’s Senior Freeze (Property Tax Reimbursement) and Homestead Benefit programs and look forward to working with the Administration and the Legislature to explore ways to update and expand these relief programs. These critical property tax relief programs support hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents who need the programs to afford to remain in their homes and communities, where they want to be. The Senior Freeze and Homestead Benefit programs are more important than ever, as families have been hit especially hard by the health and economic crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic.”

“Nearly one year after the coronavirus pandemic upended life as we knew it, New Jersey’s economic outlook appears more promising than we could have anticipated just a few short months ago, in crafting the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, we must be cognizant of the current challenges we face due to COVID-19 and make investments to help our economy and residents recover,” **said Assembly Budget Committee Chair Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin**. “I, along with my colleagues on the Budget Committee, look forward to examining what was put forth today. We appreciate the breadth and positivity of the Governor’s proposals, and we share his goal of moving New Jersey forward. The Legislature has the enormous responsibility of approving a responsible balanced budget that advances our shared priorities and works for every New Jerseyan. It is not a responsibility we take lightly. In the coming weeks we look forward to gathering information and perspective from residents and stakeholders from across the state during the hearing process. The Budget Committee is committed to crafting a budget document that will prioritize the needs of hardworking New Jersey residents, protect our most vulnerable, and move our entire state forward.”

I read the Governor’s budget with great enthusiasm,” **said Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey President & CEO Carlos Medina**. “No tax increase, money for infrastructure, paying down pension obligations and most important as a small and diverse business advocate is his recognition of the pain the small business community has suffered, enacting real programs to encourage investment in diverse startups, supporting training and grants for small business and all Main Street businesses. This is an example of broad support for the engine that drives the NJ Economy. I remind NJ residents to Buy Local and Buy NJ to also support these Main Street businesses.”

“In the face of an ongoing public health crisis, the governor’s budget meets the needs of the moment with big investments in public health, housing, schools, and much more. These are the building blocks of strong communities and a strong economy, both during normal times and especially now during a pandemic,” **said President of New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP) Brandon McKoy**. “State government has an important role to play in New Jersey’s economic recovery, and Governor Murphy’s budget recognizes that reality. Learning the lessons of the past – specifically that investments made today will make the difference between a sluggish recovery and a strong one – the budget proposal rejects austerity and spending cuts that only served to fuel racial and economic disparities. Yes, the budget is supported in part by borrowing, but those funds are buffered by strong revenue collections that are being invested in smart, fiscally responsible areas with long-term benefits. This is a marked difference from budgets of the past that borrowed funds to simply support regressive tax cuts for the wealthy and well-connected.”

“The Governor’s budget address acknowledges that we still have a long way to go as we work to recover from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, but his plan to create a 21st century sustainable green jobs economy will put us on the right track,” **said New Jersey League of Conservation Voters Executive Director Ed Potosnak**. “The clear commitment to expanding good, local union jobs in the clean energy sector will provide a living wage to sustain our middle class and help to create a prosperous future.”

“The Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey (CCSNJ) is pleased to see that Governor Phil Murphy did not include tax increases in the proposed FY2022 state budget,” **said Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey President & CEO Christina Renna**. “The business community continues to be greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and any increase in taxes would only add to the affordability crisis that businesses and residents of New Jersey face. The CCSNJ looks forward to engaging with the Administration and the Legislature during the FY2022 budget process to continue to identify ways to help the business community recover and evolve from the pandemic stronger.”

“This is a big deal! For the first time in a quarter-century, New Jersey finally has a Governor proposing a 100% pension payment. Phil Murphy is truly the Man Of The Hour,” **said Communications Workers of America (CWA) State Director Hetty Rosenstein**. “Whether it’s been his leadership on healthcare exchanges, pay equity, racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, housing, tax fairness or workers’ rights – and now a full pension payment – Governor Murphy has consistently delivered above and beyond all expectations. Governor Murphy is precisely the leader our state needs for this challenging moment in time.”

“I applaud the administration fulfilling the commitment of S-2 and recognizing the detrimental impact last year’s flat funding had on our districts. With this year’s budget, we are back on track to fully funding our public schools by FY2025,” **said Senator Teresa Ruiz**. “The Governor’s continued investment in early childhood education is extremely encouraging, as it has been a cornerstone of my legislative agenda for a long time. We know that universal access to pre-K is one of the greatest equalizers at our disposal and we are one step closer to providing that for all of New Jersey’s children. In the months ahead, it is crucial we are doing everything we can to provide students a safe return to their classrooms so that we can begin to address the learning loss which has been compounded over the last year.”

“This is a reasonable proposal that makes use of anticipated resources to address the expected needs of the people of New Jersey as we work our way through the vaccination phase of the pandemic. In many respects, this continues to be a COVID-19 budget that prioritizes the health and safety of the state’s residents and helps alleviate the

economic consequences imposed on working families, small businesses and others. We have the advantage of state revenues that are higher than anticipated," said **Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Chair Senator Paul Sarlo**. "The Governor's spending plan does a good job of using these funds to address emergent needs and to continue to invest in our priorities, including a full pension payment that saves money in the long-run, increased school aid and much-needed support for small businesses. But, the economy continues to be fragile so we should not be near-sighted about fiscal conditions. Because we have been relying on federal aid with a limited lifespan and on long-term borrowing to bridge the gap, we should put this spending plan into a two-year perspective so we avoid a 'fiscal cliff' with the drop-off of revenue in the near future. The Governor has done his job by presenting us with a budget proposal and it is now the Legislature's responsibility to give the proposal a thorough review and put in place a fiscally responsible spending plan. We will work to produce a state budget that maximizes the effectiveness of government services and makes the best use of public resources."

"NJBIA welcomes Governor Murphy's efforts to prepare a state budget that contains no taxes or raised fees," said **President and CEO of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) Michele Siekerka**. "This decision is as appropriate as it is appreciated, given the increased tax burdens on businesses and residents over recent years which have greatly contributed to New Jersey's current surplus."

"AFSCME New Jersey Council 63 supports the budget proposal that Governor Murphy unveiled today. The Governor's proposal continues to move New Jersey in the right direction and won't just get us through the COVID-19 pandemic but will propel us to a year of robust recovery," said **AFSCME New Jersey Executive Director Steve Tully**. "The Governor's budget maintains investments in public services like education, transportation, higher education, and health care, while still making the full \$1.6 billion pension payment to public employees. We strongly support the Governor's plan not to raise taxes on New Jersey's working families while still providing quality public services that the people of New Jersey rely on."

"NJAMHAA applauds Gov. Murphy's proposals related to health care, which include renewal and expansion of funding for women's health and family planning; investment in first lady Tammy Murphy's strategic initiatives to improve maternal and infant health and related racial disparities; provision of Medicaid coverage for one full year after childbirth; and strategic use of federal Medicaid funds to launch a Cover All Kids initiative for children who are currently uninsured," said **New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA) CEO Debra Wentz**.

"After years of underfunding, we applaud Governor Murphy and Treasurer Muoio for taking strides to invest in NJ's public health infrastructure. Our state can no longer afford to neglect infectious disease prevention programs. By investing \$32 million to improve capacity within local health departments and \$10 million to increase Department of Health staffing and IT capacity, our state can be better prepared to respond to infectious disease outbreaks across the state," said **Health Professionals & United Allied Employees (HPAE) President Debbie White**. "The Governor is also moving in the right direction by investing resources in our state's only public hospital. University Hospital was designated as one of three regional coordinators that led one of the hardest hit regions during the COVID-19 outbreak. HPAE looks forward to working with the Administration to ensure NJ meets its commitment to invest in UH as we applaud the additional \$10 million investment in the hospital as well as \$9 million for the designated Regional hospitals. Finally, we must recognize the tremendous commitment from Governor Murphy to public employees, as he becomes the first Governor in decades to fully fund the state's debt of \$6.4 million to our public pension. New Jersey continues to face a pandemic outbreak with tremendous challenges and we commend the Governor for the vision to not only survive this pandemic, but to be ready for the challenges that lie ahead."

"By emphasizing tax fairness and investment in education and infrastructure in this budget proposal, Governor Murphy clearly aims to lighten the burden on hard-hit families while helping to bring back jobs and financial security," said **New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech**. "After a year of unprecedented hardship and job loss due to the pandemic, the governor has taken a wise path toward reopening New Jersey with good-paying jobs for today and the future."

"Governor Murphy's commitment to not raise fares for NJTransit riders is an important win for essential workers and for New Jersey's recovery from COVID. His budget is also an important step in the process to stop relying on capital funds to cover operating costs – the 'capital to operating' transfer that has gone on for decades and denied NJTransit riders of the system improvement they need," said **Regional Plan Association President & CEO Tom Wright**. "RPA applauds Governor Murphy for his commitment to sustaining and improving equitable transit and looks forward to working with the State Legislature to identify dedicated funding sources that will provide investments that will last decades."

Governor Phil Murphy

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