

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: June 5th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

06/5/2020

Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everyone. With me to my right is a woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, the State's Epidemiologist and other familiar face, Dr. Christina Tan, great to have you both here. To my far left, the State Police Superintendent Colonel Pat Callahan, and we will definitely have a discussion about the continued extraordinary behavior by everybody in our peaceful protests overnight. There are a lot scheduled for today and over the weekend, and I know Pat will speak to that and I want to add my two cents, as well; Pat, thank you for everything. We also have the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Jared Maples is with us, First Lady Tammy Murphy is in the house and a special guest to my left, we are joined by the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission, the one and only Sue Fulton. Sue, great to have you.

I'm wearing orange, many of us are wearing orange today just to remind folks that today is National Gun Violence Awareness Day. So to the victims of gun violence and to their families and survivors, we are with you in solidarity.

Before I get to why Sue is with us today, I want to revisit the announcement I made in this room a few hours ago, stating my intent to nominate a tremendously talented attorney, Fabiana Pierre-Louis, to be the next member of our state's Supreme Court and the first black woman to serve ever on our state's highest court. New Jersey is a state stocked with talent in practically every field, and law certainly is no exception. Even in this tremendously deep and incredibly diverse pool of talent, Fabiana Pierre-Louis clearly stands above. A child of Haitian immigrants, undergraduate and law degrees from Rutgers University, distinguished former

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Assistant US Attorney, she is a standout in every way and in every sense. I am honored to put her name forward and to put someone with a different set of life experiences and perspectives on our Supreme Court, the place where people of all stripes turn for justice. And I am confident that as she moves through this process, she will receive the same acclaim that she has received from my Judicial Advisory Panel. We don't set out to make history. We set out to make sure that the cause of justice will be served. It's just all the better when that effort leads to a historic choice, and Fabiana Pierre-Louis will be a standout Justice.

Switching gears to another standout, Sue in the Motor Vehicles Commission. I will leave it to Sue to give the specifics, but we are proud to announce that MVC offices will begin their restart on Monday, June 15, with a variety of pickup and drop-off services. And on Monday, June 29, MVC aims to be able to once again offer behind-the-wheel road tests and to issues of new licenses and permits. We know that there's a lot of pent-up demand for these services and the Motor Vehicles Commission is ready, and has roughly tripled the number of road test examiners so to be able to complete roughly 16,300 tests per week.

For all services, and as I mentioned yesterday, Sue and her team have had to reimagine the entire MVC experience. Social distancing within agencies will be the norm, and all customers and MVC personnel will be required to wear face masks. But the phase-in of services and the in-building changes had been done to better ensure the health of both customers and staff. And I know Sue will have more to say on this in a few moments. However, I am proud that we are going to be able to resume services to New Jersey's motorists. MVC is probably the most-visited agency in state government, and it will be back to serve you all on June 15. Great to have you with us, Sue.

Several other quick announcements before we get to the overnight numbers. First, I anticipate that on Monday, this Monday, June 8th, we will be able to make an announcement regarding the reopening of outdoor pools, both municipal and at private clubs. We know a lot of people have been waiting for their ability to get back into the water, we don't blame them, and a lot of communities have been wanting to restart swimming as part of their recreational offerings, so stay tuned for that.

Second, I have extended the public health emergency in New Jersey for an additional 30 days. These declarations, by the way, unless they're extended expire after 30 days, which is why we've had to keep doing this. To be absolutely clear, and Judy wants to join me in this, I know, we are fully continuing our preparations for entering stage two on June 15 unabated. This action does not mean that we are seeing anything which would pause our path forward. But what this does mean is that we'll have the authority to remain vigilant and be prepared to act, should there be a new outbreak of COVID-19. Nothing more and nothing less, and no one should interpret this action to mean literally anything else. Did I get that right? Thank you.

And finally, the 85 members of the New Jersey National Guard who have been in our nation's Capital, protecting federal monuments, will have their mission ended effective at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. I've said from the outset that this was a mission limited in both scope and duration and I'm keeping that promise, and I look forward to their safe return to New Jersey.

And with that said, let us turn to the overnight numbers. Yesterday we received an additional 864 positive test results, for an updated statewide total of 163,336. Here's the trend line of new cases, and here is the trend line of the rate of spread attributed to each new case, which we call and the experts call RT, rate of transmission. When RT remains below one, and Tina, correct me if I get this wrong, it means the rate of spread of COVID-19 is slowing. Or in other words, that each new case is leading to fewer than one other new case. And today, our RT is at 0.82. Let's keep it that way. The flattening, frankly, of this curve is just as, if not more, meaningful than the flattening of any of the other curves that we look at.

The daily positivity or spot positivity rate for test samples from June 1, which was Monday, is 3.9%, and that's from roughly 22,000 tests recorded on Monday.

Looking to our long-term care facilities, we continue to work hard to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. And while we are grateful to see the numbers of lab-confirmed deaths associated with our long-term care facilities falling overall, we remain starkly aware that there remains a disproportionate share of the losses within these facilities, 5,341 blessed lives lost in long-term care facilities. Bless them all.

Our hospitals reported 1,933 patients being treated for COVID-19, and our field medical stations reported 19 patients. This is the breakdown of hospitalizations across region. The number of patients reported in either critical or intensive care was 542. Ventilator use was steady at 410. Yesterday 192 new patients entered our hospitals, but another 204 live patients left. And here are yesterday's hospital admittance and discharge numbers charted across regions.

While all of these indicators are pointing us in the right direction, it's not all good news. Today, with a heavy heart, we are announcing the loss of another 79 of our fellow New Jerseyans due to COVID-19 related complications. That puts our statewide total at a staggering 12,049 lives lost. Let that number sink in just for a second. My Lord. Let's remember a few of those lives we've lost.

Let's begin by remembering Sarah Francis, an East Orange resident for more than a half a century, who we lost at the age of 98. She spent 63 of those years with her husband Albert, who passed in 2001, and with whom she is once again united. Sara earned her certificate in early childhood development and dedicated her career to working with children in daycare. But more than that, she spent her life caring about the welfare of others. But she was just as dedicated to her community, serving as president of the advisory board to former Mayor Cardell Cooper, a legend, and was a member of both the East Orange Historical Society and the PACE centers. Active politically, Sarah was passionate about voting, and she reminded her fellow citizens to vote and organize rides to the polls on Election Day. She was a role model for my partner in government, our dear friend Sheila Oliver. She was a strong woman of faith and through her faith and service, became an inspiration to her family, her community and to all who knew her.

Her son, Albert Jr., passed away in 2004. She is survived by her daughter Arlene, with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, and seven grandchildren, along with an entire community which mourns her and which will never, ever forget her. God bless you, Sarah, and God rest your soul.

And next up, we remember David and Nancy Cassone. That's right, David and Nancy Cassone. They lived in Farmingdale in Monmouth County. Dave was an electrician and a proud member of IBEW Local 400, and I want to give a shout out to his colleague and my dear friend, Rob Simcoe, for raising this one with us, because it's an extraordinary story and it'll rip your heart out. When not in a job, Dave yearned to be outdoors. He was an avid fisherman, boater, surfer, scuba diver and hunter. He was a two-time cancer survivor, but it never changed his outlook on life. And Dave was known for always having a smile on his face. You can see it right there, and will be remembered as a gentle giant.

Sadly, one month after we lost Dave, Nancy, too, was lost to COVID-19. She was a familiar face to many in Monmouth County as the face at the front desk of Jersey Shore Arena. Nancy too was a cancer survivor and had only recently completed chemotherapy for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Dave and Nancy leave behind their 19-year-old daughter Sydney, who has just completed her freshman year at Rowan University. Friends and family say she has inherited all the best traits of her mom and dad. To continue to support her education and future, they started a GoFundMe campaign so she doesn't have to worry about how she'll be able to find her way through this time. Please help that girl out. Sydney with a Y, Sydney, S-Y-D-N-E-Y, Cassone, C-A-S-S-O-N-E.

I had the honor of speaking with Sydney yesterday. It was, without a doubt, one of the toughest calls of the couple of hundred or more that I've made to families throughout this emergency. She was a lot stronger than I was, frankly. I melted after the call. I know she's watching, so to you, Sydney, I know you definitely inherited your parents strength and I know that you're going to not only be okay, but I know you're going to make your mom and dad even prouder of you than they were already, and they were extraordinarily proud of you.

In addition to Sydney, the couple, Dave and bless them both, Nancy, leave behind Dave's sisters, Patty, Diane and Carolyn and her husband Joe, as well as Nancy's parents, Arthur and Doris, and brothers Jeffrey and Mitch and his wife Michelle, along with many nieces, nephews, and friends. God bless you, Dave. God bless you, Nancy. God bless you, Sydney. We are here with you, and God bless you all.

Let's keep all of these families in our prayers this weekend, just as we have been keeping the families of now over 12,000 other New Jersey brothers and sisters we have lost. And when you see the flags flying at half-staff, remember why they're there.

Now, let's stay along the Jersey Shore for a minute to give some credit to a young man who's really stepped forward to help his community, also in my county. This is a complete coincidence, by the way, in Manalapan. That's on the left Jake Lebowitz from Manalapan. He's a general manager for several Raceway Motors dealerships across Central Jersey and into Pennsylvania. He wanted to do something that he knew could help us emerge from this faster, so he helped organize the delivery and distribution of more than 10,000 masks to local hospitals and community-based organizations that needed them. As Jake put it, and I'll quote him, "We just figured it was worth trying to do our small part in this thing." So to you, Jake, keep up that community spirit and thank you for knowing that the seemingly little things can have a huge impact. I think that's a good note to end on.

So as we prepare to enter into what should be another good weekend for heading to the shore, or our lakes and parks, let's take stock of how far we've come, because we have been so vigilant with our social distancing. The numbers of residents in our hospitals and those needing intensive care are both down 70% or more from the peak; ventilator use is down nearly 75%, new hospitalizations are down nearly 90%. Moreover, over the past two weeks, we've continued to see gains in each of these categories. This means our hospitals are no longer bowing under the strain of COVID-19 and are better prepared for the days to come.

And we are seeing these gains not just in some places, but in every region across the state. We still may have an off day as we see with a red light, but we're having many more good days, and often those good days more than surpass the bad. However, and again we have to caution, even with the good news, we cannot let up. We have more residents in our hospitals per capita than all but one other state. We're still in the top five in the numbers of deaths, and we're still in the top half of the numbers of new cases being confirmed. We're going to show you each day now, if you go to the right column, new cases per day, we're 21st. The number in parentheses is going to be the day before. So we've dropped in numbers of new cases in our American ranking in patients in hospitals and we've ticked up slightly in deaths per day.

We will move forward, but we must continue to do so responsibly. Remember, common sense for the common good. So keep doing all that you're doing to help us get to stage two and beyond. We are going to get there, and we're going to get there together. And again, it's not just single-dimensional chess we're playing now, with the extraordinary and by the way, everybody is extraordinary, overwhelmingly in our state right now, peacefully protesting the awful killing of George Floyd and the ongoing stain of racism as we are in year one of the fifth century since slavery came to our shores. But please do that responsibly, and I mean that not just peacefully, but do it with face protection, with social distancing and if you can, please get yourself tested.

So with that, it is now my pleasure to turn the briefing over to the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicles Commission, someone by the way, I don't want to rat you out here, Sue, who recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of her graduation among the first class of women ever to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, please help me welcome the one, the only, Sue Fulton.

MVC Chair and Chief Administrator Sue Fulton: Thank you, Governor. I very much appreciate those comments. Motor Vehicle Commission used to mean a lot of people crowded into small spaces. We can't operate like that in a COVID-19 world. Our reopening plan reimagines MVC workflows with streamlined processes to ensure that the customer spends as little time as possible inside the MVC. Our team has been working hard so that we can reopen in a way that protects the safety of our 2,783 employees and the 6 million customers we serve every year, and we can't do that all at once. It has to be done in stages, like everything else we've done, while we all learn new ways of doing things.

We haven't been idle. Since we closed 12 weeks ago on March 15, we've extended expiration dates, assisted over 60,000 motorists with suspended license cases, done over 17,000 registration and title transactions, and validated about 500 permits. We've added services online, and many people are taking advantage. Customers renewed or replaced about half-a-million registrations and a quarter-million licenses online, just during our closure. The more folks who use online transactions, the fewer people will come into the agency, and the more we can keep people healthy and safe. So I have to keep encouraging people to use njmvc.gov for news and information, but also for transactions.

But I know why I'm here. Let's talk about reopening and how we're going to manage customer volume in a way that keeps everyone safe. First, we refit agencies with Plexiglas barriers and floor tape to enforce social distancing, such as you've seen in most grocery stores, and when we reopen will ask everyone, customer and

employee alike, to wear face covering inside our agencies.

Second, in order to limit crowds and speed services during the phased reopening, some agencies have been designated as licensing centers and some as vehicle centers. Licensing centers will offer all license and ID transactions, as well as driver testing. Vehicle centers will offer registration, title and license plate transactions. This will allow us to streamline our workflow, keep people separated and speed up service.

How did we get to this idea? A few weeks into the emergency, I gathered the team together and I said the bad news is COVID-19 is probably going to keep us closed for several months. More bad news, when we come back we'll have a backlog and thousands of people who need stuff done. We have got to figure out how to get faster, and we have to do it while social distancing.

And good news, we have a one-time chance to change. I said go away, think about it and come back. They said, we don't need to go away. We know how to do this, we've just never been able to do it. My agency ops team, with about 70 years of motor vehicle experience between them, proposed the separate licensing center and vehicle center program, like California does this in their big cities, Florida does this, Georgia, Pennsylvania. It's more efficient and it's faster.

Okay, third, we're going to start June 15 with drop off and pick up transactions, but no walk-in customers. We will continue to process transactions online, specifically at the license centers. MVC will be processing and validating permits in bulk from driving schools and high schools on a drop off basis. At designated vehicle centers, MVC will be processing registrations and titles in bulk from dealers. License plates can be surrendered, dropped off at these agencies in a designated area.

I know many people are anxious to register vehicles bought from private sellers, because you can't do that online. We can't allow online transactions of this nature because we have to protect the customer from fraud. However, we have developed a hybrid online and mail-in procedure we've been piloting since May 11. This allows us to complete registration title transfers on an emergent basis, starting as early as June 22. Customers are going to be able to sign up for this at njmvc.gov. All these activities will help us clear a three-month backlog from our March 15th closure.

I know that you want to hear that on June 15 we're going to throw the doors open and reopen everything, but we have to clear the backlog. Clearing the bulk transactions is necessary to make room for walk-in customers. We'll also be turning systems on the week of June 15 that will allow you to make appointments for road tests and REAL ID, so that when we start walk-ins, we'll be able to serve everyone.

June 29, as the Governor referenced, is our target date to start road tests and reissuing new licenses and permits, along with other transactions like out-of-state transfers and walk-in registrations. This June 29 date can also be considered a reopening. New Jersey teenagers and other new drivers have been waiting a long time to get the driver licenses they've been looking forward to, and we're keenly aware of the road testing backlog. With the help of some New Jersey colleges, we have been able to add 11 road test courses on a temporary basis, and we're reassigning over 100 safety specialists from our bus inspection units to serve as road test examiners. And yes, they are fully trained as road test examiners. That's the safety specialist title. This is going to enable us to do an additional 10,800 road tests per week. An additional 10,800; our previous average was 5,800, so we are tripling our capacity. We're going to use these added locations and examiners solely for those whose road tests were cancelled during the shutdown. If your road test appointment was cancelled, you will be contacted by MVC and provided a secure link to get a new appointment. We've run the numbers, and this will allow us to get entirely caught up with road testing within 60 days, give or take.

I always say that at motor vehicle we have two jobs: safety and customer service. Both of those have taken on greater meaning in these times. Our commitment is to never stop improving in our efforts to deliver the excellent service that New Jerseyans deserve. Thank you, Governor. With that, I'll turn it back to you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you, Sue. We have one of those teenagers who is looking for the road test. We didn't, Mrs. Murphy and I did not mind that you were shut down there for a period of time, but I know he'll take exception to that. Great work, and I mentioned this behind your back frequently, including publicly in this forum. You know, if we look for silver linings to this awful crisis, or crises that we're dealing with, the notion

that we could reimagine an entire branch of government, and not just any branch, the branch that has the most amount of touches with our residents of any branch of government, is really a great testimony to your leadership and your team. So hats off to you, and good luck as you reopen.

Please help me welcome again 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. The expansion of testing is the key pillar of the state's recovery efforts. It's the start of our journey to containment, and New Jersey has worked hard to boost testing capacity, remove barriers to testing, and to continue to test more residents. Our priority has been ensuring our most vulnerable populations who are at greatest risk of complications receive the testing that they need.

To that end, the department has been providing supplies, direct support and guidelines across these populations. Today I want to provide an update on the testing of some of these groups.

Long-Term Care

The Department of Health, working with the Office of Emergency Management, has provided over 120,000 test kits to long-term care facilities, with plans to provide more as the federal test kits become available. 93% of the facilities, that's 632 out of 678, have reported their baseline testing data, with over 44,000 resident tests completed, returning a 10% positivity rate.

Additionally, 65,000 staff tests have been completed, returning a 4% positivity rate.

The Veterans Homes

Universal baseline testing and retesting of all residents and staff, 5,400 individuals, has been completed. Paramus, Menlo Park and Vineland have all been tested with an 11% positivity rate. All three have been regularly retesting individuals. Right now, Paramus has five individuals testing positive, Menlo Park has two, and Vineland has three.

Homeless, Seasonal Farmworkers

The FQHCs have tested over 29,000 individuals including people suffering from homelessness. They are returning a 19.9% positivity. The seasonal farmworkers, again with our federal qualified health centers, they have tested 1500 migrant workers, returning in 11% positivity.

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections has completed universal baseline testing of all staff and all inmates, with over 28,500 tests completed to date, returning an 11% positivity of inmates and 11% positivity of staff.

State Psychiatric Hospitals

In the state psychiatric hospitals, universal testing of all of their patients is completed, 1,229 patients tested, returning a 17% positivity. Their universal testing of staff is underway. In total, 2,516 staff and patients have undergone testing.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 1,933 hospitalizations, with 542 individuals in critical care and 76% of those critical care patients are on ventilators. Unfortunately, there are two new cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. That brings our case count up to 37. The children affected have either tested positive for active COVID-19 infection, or had antibody tests that were positive, indicating exposure to the virus. Thankfully, in New Jersey, there are no deaths reported at this time. The ages of the children are between 1 and 18. The breakdown of race and ethnicity, White 22%, Black 31%, Hispanic 40%, Asian 6%, and other 3%.

As the Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths, I will share with you the breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity. White 53.3%, Black 18.5%, Hispanic 19.5%, Asian 5.4% and other 3.3%. In our state veterans homes, the numbers remain the same, as they do in our psychiatric hospitals. The daily percent positivity in New Jersey overall is 3.91%. In the North 3.55%, Central 3.63%, South 5.26%. That concludes my daily report. Stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you. And thank God, although it's one precious life that we've lost, we reiterate, only one fatality under the age of 18, that blessed four-year-old that we mentioned at the time had underlying conditions, I get asked this, what if you went up another rung? Under the age of 30, there have been 49 deaths, including that four-year-old. So under the age of 30, 49 deaths, precious lives lost out of a total of 12,049. The ages of 65 and older, that's ticked up a little bit in terms of the percentage, it's now 79.6% of our fatalities. Thank you, Judy, as always.

Pat, as I mentioned, you know, we had another good overnight, and there's just no denying it, but the tensions around the country remain high. We've got a lot of peaceful protests scheduled today and a whole lot more scheduled over the weekend. We need everybody to continue doing what you're doing, protesters, I mean everybody. This is the ultimate it takes a village. Protesters who have every right to be outraged and protesting the killing of George Floyd, yet another name that compiles this mosaic of the stain of racism in our country, but alongside them faith leaders, community leaders, elected officials, law enforcement. And, you know, we can't declare victory. We have to be vigilant, folks. We have to continue to achieve that extraordinary reality, which very few places in America right now are achieving, and we've got to do it, by the way, keeping yourself healthy and not reigniting COVID-19 with face coverings and social distancing.

So with that introduction, Pat, give us a sense of how you're feeling about things both overnight and what you're looking at today and over the weekend, and thank you for your leadership.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. With regard to the demonstrations around the state, I think there's almost 30 today that we're monitoring. I think there's upwards of 100, I think 60 tomorrow and 40 or so that we are aware of on Sunday. And we work seamlessly with our local and county law enforcement agencies to support them where we need to support them. We do have troopers in North, Central and South. Actually, after this, I'm going to go talk to about 100 troopers, up at Totowa, at Troop B headquarters.

And I think the Governor had mentioned it earlier in the week, the investment we made in our community engagement over the past several years, although I'll knock on wood, is paying off in dividends. Daily, daily contact, even long before Minneapolis happened, years of real and sometimes candid and difficult discussions about where we are and where we need to be, and I'm honored to be a part of that conversation and I will never hesitate to be out there sitting in a position to answer difficult questions sometimes about law enforcement and community relations. But with the Attorney General's leadership and his Excellence in Policing initiatives, I think as I've said it before, New Jersey serves as a phenomenal example.

So we're, again, I think weather-wise it's going to be a nice weekend, so beyond the protests, we'll be watching the beaches and the parks. And if I could just take a second to thank Sue, because there's not a day goes by when I'm walking my dog that my neighbors with teenagers ask me about their kids' permits and licensing, so now we're going to have to find something else to talk about. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Actually, the real reason we got Sue here is so Pat and I could put her in a pincer with our requests from our kids. Pat, any COVID-19 unrelated to peaceful protests, compliance challenges?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: There was actually none. None on the overnight, no Executive Order violations issued last night, Governor. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Listen, again, you never declare victory given the tensions are rightfully high in our country right now, but the community policing and the investment, and to give a shout out to the Attorney General, to you, Pat, personally, to the police chiefs including Chief Leusner, who's the Chief of the Police Chiefs, to the rank and file, the great unions out there, and clearly faith leaders, community leaders, elected officials, that coming together. Thanks to our friend Vin Gopal I had the honor to speak a few minutes before coming over here, to Sergeant Frank Sangi, who's on the Asbury Park force, who's a Howell native. He's the guy who got clocked in the head the other night, with a big rock. And, you know, just an example of one piece of that mosaic that makes all of this so far, at least, be as strong and as solid as we are. So I wish Frank a speedy recovery and thank him for his service, but to each and every one of you out there, bless you. We're setting an extraordinary example, but we have to continue to do that. This must remain peaceful. It's certainly the passion, the anger, the frustration is not only understandable, we respect it, we accept it. Who could blame anyone? The stain of racism is real, but let's stay peaceful. And by the way, while you're staying peaceful, please stay healthy.

With that, I think Aswan, nice to have you back. I think we're going to start over with Dustin if that's okay with you, and then we'll go from my right to left. Good afternoon.

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: Good afternoon. It's been six weeks since you first presented the Road to Recovery map, which talked a lot about robust contact tracing. When will local health departments realistically receive more tracers or resources from the state, beyond the app that's in development?

One local health official we spoke to said if he had aid sooner, more lives could have been saved. So can you respond to that and explain why a comprehensive contact tracing plan has still not arrived, while the state is beginning to reopen?

On pools, do you intend to issue guidance Monday or just an announcement with guidance to follow at some later date? And then today, Congressman Malinowski said on Twitter that New Jersey should have ended the National Guard mission in Washington much earlier, instead of helping turn Washington into a quote "armed camp". He said New Jersey should have nothing to do with this. Do you have any response to that?

Governor Phil Murphy: So I'll take these, but Judy, if you want to come in on any of these, don't hesitate. Contact tracing, we are going to be, I would suspect, early week giving you the full -- I had sort of promised I think a week ago today that in about 10 days we'd be giving you the full soup to nuts on what that looks like now and what it will look like. Does that sound fair to you? Bear with us on that.

This notion of more lives saved, if the world had figured this out sooner, of course there would have been more lives saved. We're playing the hand that we've been dealt as best we can. And the health level, and I want to say this, Dustin, the folks at the county level who are doing this day in and day out have done an extraordinary job.

I'm not sure how detailed we're going to be on Monday on pools, so can you bear with us? It'll either be an announcement with guidance immediately thereafter, or we'll give you both on Monday, but it'll be very early week and very soon.

I respect the Congressman. He and I actually had a conversation earlier today. It's ending tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. It could have ended earlier. It will be a total of six days, and these folks were guarding national monuments, as we had said they would, and that has not veered from that. They had the so-called graveyard shift from 1:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. They've done, by all accounts, an extraordinary job, with all due respect. They have not been anywhere near crowd control or any of these other awful, you know, what we saw with that photo op that we had nothing whatsoever to do with that. And again, their mission will be ended tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. and I thank them for their service. I've got nothing really else to add on that.

Again, we'll come back to if we've got more on pools, in terms of what we'll preview on Monday, I'll come back to you, or one of us will. Mahen, will you help me out there? I'm not sure it's the same day. It may be one day after the other. Elise, good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. Donald Trump speaking at the White House this morning about unemployment data, lower overall, but higher for African Americans, invoked George Floyd and said, "Hopefully George is looking down right now and saying there's a great thing happening for our country. It's a great day for him. It's a great day for everybody." Are you concerned about the President's mental state and his ability to do his job? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Elise, I did not see that. We were tied up making the historic announcement of Fabiana Pierre-Louis. All I could say is George Floyd should be alive, period, full stop, no matter how you slice it, and we saw this guy get killed in broad daylight. Just shortly thereafter I asked Pat, is there a protocol that I've missed all these years, not just as Governor, but growing up, putting a knee on somebody's neck? Was that ever part of the playbook? And Pat said, it is not part of any playbook in law enforcement or policing. I don't have any insight as it relates to the President, but this guy should be alive today, and we are not whole as a nation. It's not just George Floyd, bless his soul. It's Ahmaud Arbery, it's Breonna Taylor and it's so many other names that have come before.

I don't want to repeat myself but I will. The stain of racism remains with us. It is unfinished business in our country. People are angry, frustrated, who can blame them? And George Floyd should be alive today to speak for himself, and God rest his soul. Thank you.

Reporter: I have a few viewer questions here for you. The first one on car inspections, when they plan to open and the guidelines on how they will do that? And in regards to protests, it's kind of hard to social distance a protest, so do you fear a spike in COVID from these gathered protests? And people that are angry that you can't have graduations but you can have a protest.

And the third question would be, forgive me, I've got to find my email here. Do you foresee an approximate date as to when you can actually attend horse races?

Governor Phil Murphy: Sue, do you want to hit car inspections?

MVC Chair and Chief Administrator Sue Fulton: Yes, sir. Our inspections are done by a third-party vendor and a contractor and they make those decisions. They have been following our lead throughout but I have not yet heard what their decision will be. I expect that will come out later today and we will push that out as well.

Governor Phil Murphy: On your second question, do we get concerned about a potential spike coming out of this? Yeah, it does concern us, which is why we're asking folks, we respect completely your right to protest, particularly given the gravity of why folks are protesting, but please do it responsibly, as much distance and something like this to cover your face. And I said this yesterday, Judy, I think we probably -- I want to say this more forcefully. If you do participate, get tested. We've got capacity. We've spent the past three months building up capacity unlike any American state. It's there. One of our kids went to get tested today and noticed only one other car in line to get tested, in a place with a lot more capacity. So I'd say yes, I'm concerned but that's not a reason not to protest, but it is a reason to be responsible. And on that list, I think, should be to get tested.

I don't have a date for you on fans attending live races. We don't have that yet. Let's get the races up and running first themselves. That's going to be on a list of things that we hope to get to, but we're not there yet. Thank you.

Reporter: Two for you, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Please.

Reporter: First off, should municipal police forces be better reflections of the population and community of whatever municipality it is, based on ethnic makeup? And is it possible that some sort of mandate in hiring could help improve that situation?

And secondly, when other priorities come up for the Legislature, do you see a push for legalizing recreational cannabis as a potential way to help offset COVID expenses and pay down debt?

Governor Phil Murphy: Maybe a way to offset something else as well, but I have not had any conversations about legalizing cannabis as a way to offset, period, or as a way to offset some of the expenses. I'd be lying if I said we have. It's something that I continue to believe we should do. We're not inventing cannabis. It exists. Let's put it into the hands of some amount of authority. Let's regulate it properly. Let's keep it from our kids and do the right things associated with it.

Listen, I can speak on your first point. We are the most diverse state in America, by most measures. And I think we pride ourselves when we can put forward in any organization, government, law enforcement, elected officials. Cabinets, professional staffs, when we can put forward a team on the field that reflects the experience and the diversity in the lives of the folks that we're serving.

I haven't had the conversation, honestly, at the municipal level a whole lot, but I have had it with that guy over there. And that's a topic that Pat, you and I and the Attorney General and our teams have spent an enormous amount of time on. Again, this long predates the tragic killing of George Floyd and it long predates COVID-19. This goes back to our earliest days together. Pat, you may want to spend a minute on the steps that you have, and continue to take, in terms of diversifying your extraordinary force.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Yes, I will. Within the past few years, the Attorney General had Lora Fong lead the diversity and inclusion effort. That's just a piece of it. Our recruiting bureau, and meeting again with our faith-based communities, with the NAACP, with the National

Action Network, law enforcement across the nation is seeing a decline in the recruitment overall, of all demographics. And I think, and we've talked about this before, I know Judy had talked about this as a call to action. And we're seeing that.

To give you an idea, the 193 recruits that we have, there's 192 right now, and they had the opportunity to not come back to training. So I think, although we were a little bit worried about recruiting, I think we have a generation here that's willing to serve and certainly having, throughout all law enforcement, not just the State Police, having the men and women that wear our uniforms be a reflection of the community of the state of New Jersey and what our demographics are, we work on that. We work on that constantly and, again, we need to make sure that we have everything in place to have those law enforcement agencies reflect the state of New Jersey.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think as a general matter, it's a work in progress. I don't think any of us can declare victory. I've had this conversation, not specific to law enforcement, but as just a general leadership matter with the exploding populations in our state, South Asian, Latino, to pick two where the numbers, Asian Americans where the numbers are exploding, yet when those folks look for counterparts in leadership or authority, they see a far smaller representation in this sort of lead lag reality. I think our job collectively is to shrink that gap between that explosion of population, that presence on the one hand, and the presence and authority and government and community leadership beyond.

I mentioned this morning, when I had the great honor to nominate Fabiana Pierre-Louis for the Supreme Court. I mentioned two general principles that guided us. One is we wanted to take the politics out of these decisions. And sadly, about a decade ago, it had become political. Secondly we needed, at the highest levels, the highest court we have in our land, we needed to have a reflection of our diversity, a reflection of the experience, both racially in this case, as a gender matter, and as a generational matter. And so I think it does and it needs to continue to guide us, not just in law enforcement, but in the entirety of authority leadership in our state. Thank you. Let's hit Brent and then Charlie, and I think we're done.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: It's now been two weeks since beaches were allowed to reopen. Have you seen any data that worries you, or are you optimistic by what you've seen? Why can't restaurants open June 12 so they have the weekend and not – some say June 15 is a few days too late. They could get more money if they opened up a few days earlier. And since you're not giving out tickets to organizers of the police brutality protests for violating your orders, do you, in hindsight, believe it was wrong to charge organizers of the reopening protests?

Governor Phil Murphy: Brent, I would say we had very poor weather on weekend one, and I don't think we learned anything, other than it was a good opportunity for the local municipalities and the shore counties to put their plans in place and not have to deal with throngs of people. That weekend, I think Monday was the only day with reasonable weather, and even then it was cool. The data, the health data, Judy and Tina, continue to look good right now. I'm not sure we're far enough away from the weekend of good weather, but they continue to look good.

I can't tell you how many fill-in-the-blank June 12 versus 15, June 5 versus 15, the Restaurant Association wanted it last week. We're doing, we put a date in that we felt was the most responsible on the one hand, and also gave them the runway to get their staffing and protocols in place, given the guidance that Judy and team have put out, and that's the day we're sticking with. I will say the exception we made, and I want to remind people of this, is faith a week from today, June 12.

And the decision to cite or not to cite is a law enforcement decision. I won't say it's regret or not regret, it is what it is. For the most part, the COVID-related demonstrations and compliance, lack of compliance, have kind of disappeared for the time being. I don't want to jinx that, Pat, but that's just a reality. And I want to make sure everybody who is protesting out there does it peacefully and does it responsibly, including watching out for their health and the health of those with them. Thank you. Charlie, sir, do you have anything back there or are you good? I can't see. You're good? No? Okay.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Good afternoon, Governor. If you could talk a little bit about your choice to be the next Middlesex County Prosecutor, and when and how a confirmation hearing for her might be held in these difficult times?

I wanted to ask if you've commented on and I haven't heard, do you have any comment on the arrest of the Asbury Park reporter, Gustavo Martinez? And what about the violence that Mr. Martinez captured on his video? Did you watch the video? And, you know, do you have any reaction to it?

Also, I've asked many authorities and have not gotten a straight answer, is violating a municipal curfew an arrestable offense? If so, what statute allows for that?

And finally, a few towns in New Jersey have been implementing emergency curfews when there's not actually an emergency. For instance, Asbury Park has already preemptively imposed a citywide curfew tonight, simply because a peaceful protest has been planned. How does a peaceful protest qualify as an imminent emergency under the law, Governor?

Governor Phil Murphy: Let me start. Parimal Garg, Deputy Counsel is with us. I'm going to start and then Parimal, hand it to you and maybe to Pat. Middlesex prosecutor, outstanding, qualified, very honored to nominate. Don't have a sense, Charlie, on timing. We can come back to with that, once we get it, but honored.

I am happy to say that real time, when the reporter was arrested, our team and the collective team swung into action, including the Attorney General's Office and helped bring that to a swift, as swift a resolution as possible. And I've not seen the video but I do know of the violence and I partly know of the violence, because I spoke to Sergeant Frank Sangi, who was in that milieu that night. And again, that's an exception. That was an exception, and there have been very few. So we had some challenges in Trenton here, in Atlantic City a week ago, or pardon me, last Sunday. Asbury Park, I think was Monday night. We had one or two incidents, but there have not been many, and we stand out as a huge exception nationally and I hope, I hope we can stay that way and the rest of the nation continues to be that way.

I will now turn to Mahen on, is violating a municipal curfew an arrestable offense, and how do we react to emergency curfews, either you or Pat, Mahen – Parimal, I'm calling you Mahen – Parimal Garg to you or Pat in terms of emergency curfew in a preemptive step before a protest has taken place?

Deputy Chief Counsel Parimal Garg: Sure. So municipalities do have the general authority to impose curfews in the interest of public safety, but as to how those curfews are enforced and what the consequences are for violating those curfews, I would defer to law enforcement and to the colonel.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, anything you want to add to that?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I would just add that it was, Charlie, it most likely would be a summons. I don't think, it's almost comparable to a local ordinance violation, being handed a summons. I don't envision anybody getting arrested unless there was escalation and failure, you know, something beyond that. But I would just think the handwritten summons would probably be the way you'd see the vast majority, if not in all those cases.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you. Thanks to each of you. I'm going to mask up here. We will, this weekend, be in the same mode that we have been of late, which is we will communicate virtually with you both tomorrow and Sunday. And so we'll be back together on Monday. It's not clear yet whether we have a White House VTC. At the moment, we don't. If we don't, it will be one o'clock but please bear with us. Mahen will get to you if that changes. Again, we'll be communicating with you virtually both tomorrow and on Sunday.

I want to thank Judy and Tina and your teams. Thank you as always. Sue, great to have you here. Honored and thank you for your leadership. Pat, likewise, Jared, Parimal, Mahen and team. Again, I want to end today as I've ended yesterday and ended many days of late, with two big thank yous and two big favors associated with it, on behalf of all of us. Number one, for all that New Jersey has done, each and every one of you, to beat the crap out of this virus and to drive the numbers down, we say thank you. You have our unending respect.

The favor is you've got to please continue to do it. And please, especially continue to do it where it's gonna get more complicated. You know, when you're in a restaurant, or you're, thank God we'll be able to worship again indoors soon, or you're in a retail setting, or you're protesting, as you have every right to do, please, please, please continue to do the basics.

And then secondly, again, specific to the protesters, we respect, we accept, we honor the protests, but please, please make sure they are peaceful. And it takes that whole village to make sure that happens. So far, we have set an example for our country that is unmatched. We just need folks to continue to do that. We must remain peaceful, and we will together change, please God at long last, address and change the stain of racism, and please God remove it from our nation. Thank you all. God bless you all.

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