

# In 2024 State of the State Address, Governor Murphy Details Landmark Progress and Ambitious New Initiatives to Make New Jersey More Affordable for More Families

01/9/2024

*Outlines Plans to Work with Legislature for Providing Medical Debt Relief, Promoting Affordable Housing, Improving Literacy Rates Among Students, and Protecting Reproductive Rights, Voting Rights, and Other Fundamental Freedoms*

*Announces "AI Moonshot" to Establish New Jersey as Home Base for AI-Powered Discoveries to Create New Economic Opportunities and Jobs in the Industries of Tomorrow*

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy today delivered his 2024 State of the State Address at the State House in Trenton, his sixth since taking office. In his speech, Governor Murphy vowed to make New Jersey more affordable for more families, continue to establish New Jersey as the best place to raise a family, and build upon the historic economic growth of the last six years by securing New Jersey's future in leading emerging industries.

"Together, we are building a New Jersey that is better today and brighter tomorrow," said **Governor Murphy**. "Over the past six years, we have committed to building a state that is stronger and fairer for all – and that lives up to the promise of opportunity and hope for every New Jerseyan. Today, we reaffirm that commitment by dedicating ourselves to making New Jersey the best place anywhere to raise a family. We know these are hard times, so we are working even harder to strengthen and grow New Jersey's middle class."

## **Making New Jersey More Affordable for More Families**

Doubling down on his efforts to make New Jersey a more affordable place to live, work, and retire, Governor Murphy today called on the Legislature to advance initiatives that will make working families more financially secure, including:

- **Introducing a medical debt relief legislative package** that will help families avoid falling into medical debt and protect New Jerseyans from predatory medical debt collectors. Starting with the Louisa Carman Medical Debt Relief Act, named in honor of a member of the Governor's Office who helped craft the proposal and tragically passed away this year, this package will build upon the \$10 million investment in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget to make health care more affordable and accessible for every New Jerseyan;
- **Passing affordable housing legislation introduced by legislative leadership** to help New Jersey on course to eliminate our state's shortage of hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units in an efficient and equitable manner.

The Governor also highlighted the ongoing progress the Murphy Administration has made in growing the economy, raising wages, and lowering costs for working families, including:

- **20 new tax cuts to provide historic tax relief for New Jersey's middle-class families and seniors, including the ANCHOR program**, which has delivered nearly \$4 billion in property tax relief to more than 1.5 million seniors and middle-class families over the last two years, along with the newly created Stay NJ program, which will cut property taxes in half for many seniors across the state beginning in 2026;
- **Raising the minimum wage to over \$15 an hour as of the start of 2024;**
- **Strengthening organized labor** by meaningfully growing New Jersey's unionized workforce and doubling the number of apprenticeship programs in emerging fields such as life sciences, adult-use cannabis, home health care, and clean energy;
- **Investing billions in critical upgrades to New Jersey's transportation infrastructure**, including the Gateway Program, which will create 70,000 good-paying, union jobs and make it easier for New Jerseyans to safely and affordably commute;
- **Expanding workforce development initiatives** that create opportunities for veterans and address critical labor shortages, particularly in the fields of nursing and education;
- **Spurring the creation of nearly 60,000 new small business sites over the last six years**, with the support of nearly \$1 billion in small business relief through the EDA;
- **Positioning New Jersey for long-term economic prosperity** with seven credit rating upgrades that could save New Jersey taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars over time; and
- **Driving job growth in the industries of tomorrow** through strategically targeted incentives in fields like clean energy, film and television, fintech, life sciences, adult-use cannabis, and gaming.

"As we begin a new legislative session, let us unite together to continue addressing the biggest challenge facing our families - the fact that, for too many, the cost of living is too high," added **Governor Murphy**. "Since the last administration, we have more than doubled the growth rate of our economy. At the same time, we have created nearly 200,000 jobs to give people the confidence that they can make their future in the Garden State."

## **Making New Jersey the Best Place to Raise a Family**

Throughout his address, Governor Murphy outlined his administration's continued progress in making New Jersey "the best place to grow up, settle down, and raise a family," unveiling several additional new proposals to advance this vision such as:

- **Defending reproductive freedom by calling on the Legislature to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for abortion procedures and establish protections for patients**, furthering the Murphy Administration's

- **Protecting the fundamental right to vote by instituting same-day voter registration and expanding the right to vote to 16 and 17 year-olds in local school board elections**, building on previous investments to strengthen New Jersey's democracy including the New Voter Empowerment Act, automatic voter registration, in-person early voting, online voter registration, and the restoration of voting rights for individuals on probation or parole, among other reforms;
- **Introducing new initiatives to increase literacy rates among schoolchildren** and further cement New Jersey's status as the best public education system in America;
- **Building on progress in expanding pre-K to more than 14,000 children** to make universal pre-K a reality, so more kids can participate and more parents get the child care assistance they need no matter their economic status;
- **Reforming New Jersey's criminal justice system** through a new clemency initiative to ensure we live up to our promise as a state for second chances; and
- **Upholding gun safety laws, expanding community violence prevention programs, and supporting members of law enforcement** to build on the Murphy Administration's success in lowering shootings in New Jersey to a nearly 15-year low.

**Securing New Jersey's Future as an Innovation Leader**

Building on New Jersey's momentum as the best place in the nation to live, work, and raise a family, Governor Murphy also outlined his vision for the future of economic growth in the state. Invoking President John F. Kennedy's historic 1963 declaration to land an American on the moon, Governor Murphy announced an "AI Moonshot" to galvanize New Jersey's innovators and industry leaders to unleash a new generation of AI-powered discoveries and create economic opportunities for New Jersey's workers and families.

This endeavor will capitalize on New Jersey's existing, world-leading investments and initiatives in the realm of AI, including: the creation of an [AI Innovation Hub in partnership with Princeton University and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority](#) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/j0xbc7\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/j0xbc7_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS$)); the formation of New Jersey's first-ever Task Force on AI, charged with studying the societal impact – and encouraging the ethical use of – AI; the establishment of a statewide initiative that has already begun to train thousands of public sector workers to use generative AI to help New Jerseyans access benefits; the issuance of the State's first policy on AI use to guide State employees to responsibly use generative AI to improve how government delivers services to New Jerseyans; the promotion of [international partnerships](#) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/zsybc7\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/zsybc7_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS$)); to advance collaborative research & development in AI and create jobs in the industries of the future; and the appointment of New Jersey's first-ever Chief AI Strategist, Beth Noveck, who will play a leading role in shaping the trajectory of New Jersey's AI Moonshot.

"With New Jersey's AI Moonshot, our mission is for our state's top minds to pioneer a series of AI-powered breakthroughs over the next decade that will change the lives of billions for the better," **said Governor Murphy**. "Our state government will be a catalyst for bringing together innovators and leaders to invest in research and development, and ultimately, establish New Jersey as the home base for AI-powered game-changers. From revolutionizing the discovery of new drugs and medical treatments to creating new, personalized educational tools that can dramatically improve literacy rates and math skills among our kids, whatever the challenge, we are going to harness generative AI to unlock a new generation of possibilities for our families."

For the Governor's full address, click [here](#) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/flzbc7\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/flzbc7_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS$)).

For the biographies of the special guests at this year's State of the State address, click [here](#) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/vd0bc7\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3r0vtk/7ys5259b/vd0bc7_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!PMw8l8uMWomQuR2SUgP7tNPiTpDoJyZrhLY13gydyU-LS$)).

**Governor Phil Murphy**

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