

## Governor Phil Murphy



photo: view of NJ Trenton DOM


# REMARKS: Governor Murphy Announces Tahesha Way as New Jersey's Third Lieutenant Governor

09/8/2023

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As you have entered the State House this week, you may have noticed that the American and New Jersey flags are flying at full staff, for the first time in a full month.

From August 4 to September 4, those flags were lowered in honor of our late Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, my partner in government—and one of the finest public servants our state has ever known.

During these past weeks of mourning and remembrance, I have heard the same sentiment expressed by New Jerseyans up and down our state.

It is a sentiment I not only share—but consider a call to action.

And that is this: With Sheila gone, it is now our turn to keep her legacy alive.

To continue working together—as one New Jersey family—to build a stronger, fairer state for *every* family.

And, to be a champion—like Sheila was—for the voiceless. For the underserved. And for the communities that have historically been left behind.

So today, with our flags flying high, I am proud to announce that I have selected a proven public servant - with a superb record of accomplishments - to join me in finishing the job that Sheila and I started.

Today, it is my incredible honor to introduce New Jersey's next Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State Tahesha Leila Way!



And right off the bat, let me say: there is no better person for the job.

As New Jersey's Secretary of State, Tahesha has been a vital member of my administration since day one.

But long before she joined our team, Tahesha had *already* dedicated every ounce of herself to serving our state's families.

And what Tahesha has demonstrated—time and again—is that she can handle the single most important responsibility of *any* Lieutenant Governor. And that is being ready to step in, and serve as Governor, if needed.


She is brilliant. She is battle-tested. And she represents the best of New Jersey.

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Tammy and I have had the pleasure of knowing Tahesha—and her husband, Charles—for many years... since well before my time in the Governor's office.

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And let me tell you, she is as wonderful a person as she is a public servant.

Warm, passionate, principled.

And guided by the honest belief that hard work and perseverance can lead you anywhere.

That belief was instilled in Tahesha at a young age by her late parents, who were public servants in their own right, as employees with the New York City Transit Authority. Her Mother was a railroad clerk and her Father was a bus operator.

And over the course of her career, Tahesha has worked day and night to support the millions of New Jerseyans who share her parents' story. Our neighbors who work long hours, every day, to move our state forward... and who ask for nothing more than a fair shake.

Now, as I mentioned, one of the most important qualities in a Lieutenant Governor is not only having the ability to lead, but having an ample track-record *as* a leader. Well, that is just *one* of Tahesha's many strengths: experience. Like Lieutenant Governor Oliver, she has served at nearly every level of our state's government.

From the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, to the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council, and even in our state's judicial branch—as an Administrative Law Judge.

And during her time as Secretary of State, Tahesha has set a new, high standard for defending democracy... both here in New Jersey, and across the nation.

As President of the National Association of Secretaries of State, Tahesha has inspired election officials across the country to expand access to the ballot box, and ensure that every eligible American can participate in our democratic process.

She has also thrived under the most challenging circumstances you can imagine. In the face of a once-in-a-century pandemic, along with a relentless assault on our democracy, led by a certain former President who will remain unnamed, Tahesha went above and beyond to secure our election system here in New Jersey.

And under her watch, we saw a record number of New Jerseyans vote in the 2020 election. That is an astonishing feat, considering it was the first major election conducted almost entirely by mail.

So Tahesha turned that unprecedented challenge into a critical opportunity. She seized the moment to help more New Jerseyans than ever turn out and exercise their most fundamental right. That is the definition of leadership.



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And during that same period, Tahesha also demonstrated her leadership abilities with the 2020 census. As Chair of New Jersey's Complete Count Commission—a non-partisan body—she worked to ensure that every one of our residents was counted.



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Thanks to her efforts, our state retained full representation in Congress, which has had a direct and positive impact on securing federal funding to address our state's needs.

Tahesha has also done tremendous job in delivering on one of her core responsibilities as Secretary of State. And that is advocating for our state's cultural and historic treasures—as well as promoting tourism in every region of New Jersey.

In fact, with her team's help, New Jersey's tourism industry is expected to generate nearly \$48 billion in revenue during this year alone. That is a record-high haul. And our tourism economy is booming, in no small part, because of Tahesha's leadership.

And that leadership was on full display just a couple weeks ago, when Tahesha joined me in Somerville to settle a long-simmering debate here in the Garden State.

The two of us stood together to declare, once and for all, that Central Jersey exists—period!

So, clearly: Tahesha is not one to shy away from controversial topics. She takes a stand.

And together, our administration will remain laser-focused on our top priorities, from making life more affordable for every New Jerseyan, to defending our fundamental freedoms, to keeping our families and communities safe.

So once again, I am honored to *re*-introduce Tahesha to the people of New Jersey. And I cannot wait for everyone to get to know her, Charles, and their children: Fallon, Farrah, Faythe, and Fiona.

Now, one little fun fact, for those who may not know: Charles is not just Tahesha's loving husband, he is also a former Fullback with the New York Giants. But, we may just bring him out of retirement if the press scrums get too crazy! So please—be on your best behavior.

But in all seriousness, please join me in welcoming the third Lieutenant Governor of our great state, Wayne, New Jersey's very own Tahesha Way!

## Governor Phil Murphy

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