

Governor Phil Murphy

Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy Tours Federal COVID-19 Surge Testing Site

01/18/2022

TRENTON – Governor Murphy today signed a series of bills to enhance employment opportunities, training, and other supports for individuals with disabilities.

“All New Jerseyans deserve equal access to community supports and opportunities,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Prioritizing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace is a critical step forward in ensuring that our state is stronger and fairer for everyone. These essential measures recognize the significant contributions that disabled individuals provide to our economy, will expand access to training and new employment opportunities, and positively impact the lives of many of our residents.”

“Governor Murphy’s signing of A6062 today brings us closer to achieving his vision for economic equity and inclusiveness by creating more and better work opportunities for people with disabilities,” **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. “This legislation will benefit both employers and employees by enabling small- and medium-sized businesses to hire from an expanded pool of talent.”

Governor Murphy signed the following bills into law:

S-4102/A-6230 (Sweeney, Ruiz/Benson, Mejia, Zwicker) – Establishes Direct Support Professional Career Development Program; appropriates \$1,000,000

S-4210/A-6062 (Sweeney, Greenstein/Greenwald, McKnight, Mukherji) – Requires EDA to establish loan program to assist certain businesses with funding to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

S-4211/A-6228 (Sweeney, Corrado/Benson, Speight, Zwicker) – Establishes county college-based adult centers for transition for individuals with developmental disabilities; makes annual appropriation of \$4.5 million.

A-5294/S-3418 (Speight, Vainieri Huttle, Verrelli/Gopal, Madden) – Provides fast track hiring and advancement employment opportunities by State for persons with significant disabilities.

A-5296/S-3426 (Speight, Vainieri Huttle, McKnight/T. Kean, Schepisi) – Provides for employment by State of certain persons with disabilities.

A-5336wGR/S-3441 (Benson, Freiman, Vainieri Huttle/Diegnan, Madden) – Requires DHS to establish payment programs for purchase of transportation services from private sector and government transportation service providers.

“These laws will ensure that New Jersey continues to make real progress in improving the lives and livelihoods of those with developmental disabilities,” **said former Senate President Steve Sweeney**. “They will help facilitate the transition of the disabled at a critical time in their lives and make reasonable workplace accommodations so they can maintain life-affirming employment. This is about equal opportunities for the disabled so they can live full, rewarding lives as contributing members of society.”

“Hiring and employment statistics tell us what we have long known, which is that individuals with disabilities are too often underrepresented and overlooked in the New Jersey workforce, while also experiencing higher rates of poverty,” **said Senator Vin Gopal**. “This measure will help us begin to break that cycle.”

“Signing this bill into law will provide invaluable opportunities, allowing persons with disabilities to learn new skills and receive benefits through internships as well as employment in the public sector. In the meantime, the State can benefit from the unique contributions these individuals can make as employees,” **said Senator Fred Madden**.

“Public transit services can pose many accessibility problems and in New Jersey, and signing this bill is an active step to eliminate those issues,” **continued Senator Madden**. “With a set budget outlined and a program that assists some of our most vulnerable residents, we can expand accessibility for New Jersey public transportation.”

“It is time to stop abandoning special needs individuals when they reach age 21 and devote more energy to teaching them how to live productive, responsible adult lives,” **said Senator Kristin Corrado**. “This new program will change lives for individuals with developmental disabilities who have aged out of traditional support programs. The centers will help students progress to postsecondary education and develop life skills necessary for them to find employment and live independently as adults.”

“It’s clear from the available data that New Jerseyans with disabilities are an underrepresented segment in public employment. This legislation will help rectify that issue and improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens,” **said Senator Holly Schepisi**. “By allowing the state to more effectively recruit, hire, and promote people with disabilities in the workplace, we will help create a more inclusive policy for these individuals and provide better job opportunities for them in the future.”

“People with disabilities often struggle to find employment at higher rates ([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/3roiBg/nrddit/zcyodu_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!bnuDr_D5QIADOpZmz0ta3e25E30VGWU7Fbmt0AdG0vdjM0j08jRMQjhi67ksleq2ghpsHswkae8\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/3roiBg/nrddit/zcyodu_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!bnuDr_D5QIADOpZmz0ta3e25E30VGWU7Fbmt0AdG0vdjM0j08jRMQjhi67ksleq2ghpsHswkae8$)) than their non-disabled peers. Although there are several factors that contribute to this disparity, one major reason is a lack of accessibility. People with disabilities are excluded from countless job opportunities when employers do not or cannot provide the tools necessary to perform the job,” **said Assemblymembers Greenwald, McKnight, and Mukherji in a joint statement on A-6062**. “Enabling business owners to provide those accommodations would help more residents find work that could adapt to their unique needs, while expanding the pool of qualified candidates from which employers could hire. Ensuring equity in the workplace is not only beneficial for everyone, but is ultimately our responsibility.”

“As the COVID-19 pandemic carries on, it is more important than ever to ensure that our residents with developmental disabilities have the tools they need to transition out of our public school system and successfully take on the world. Disruptions to the school year have only added to the stress that many students with developmental disabilities feel as they age out of the public school system and are forced to adjust to a new normal. We have the opportunity to provide these individuals with much needed support that will put them in a better position to lead independent and rewarding lives by securing an education or joining the workforce,” **said Assemblymembers Benson, Speight, and Zwicker in a joint statement on A-6228**. “Instead of abandoning our residents with special needs, this law will let us continue to support them with trained direct support professionals as well as services, programs and resources that will make a difference.”

“It is unfair that members of the disability community are constantly relying on expensive ride-share services to get to and from doctors’ appointments,” **said Assemblymembers Benson, Freiman, and Vainieri Huttle in a joint statement on A-5336**. “Studying this issue will help us find the best solutions to this problem and make those solutions a reality, such as creating payment plan options for various transportation services that would fit the unique needs and schedules of members of the disability community.”

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