

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [Press Releases](#) / Governor Sherrill on the Resignation of Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell

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Posted on 09/25/2026

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good afternoon.

I want to take a few minutes today to speak directly to you – the people of New Jersey.

As many of you have heard me say, I hold public service in incredibly high regard.

Public service – holding the public trust – is a privilege, not a right.

I feel deeply that it is a commitment by elected officials to serve the people – not their own self-interest.

To honor that commitment, public servants must abide by the highest ethical standards.

That standard applies to everyone – regardless of their title.

Yesterday, I called for Lieutenant Governor Dale Caldwell to resign, following the release of the independent investigation into his conduct.

As outlined in the report, the investigation found that the Lieutenant Governor failed to uphold the responsibilities of his office – and demonstrated a pattern of behavior that does not meet the standards of this Administration.

The report documents serious, repeated violations of state policy, including ethical lapses and a substantiated finding of sexual harassment.

I gave the Lieutenant Governor until today to resign.

He submitted his resignation to me this afternoon, which I accepted.

I appreciate his service both on the campaign and in the first months of this Administration, particularly in supporting our business agenda.

Lieutenant Governor Caldwell has also been deeply committed to addressing the longstanding challenges facing Black communities across our state.

I share in that commitment. My administration will continue this important work and remain steadfast in our efforts to expand opportunity for all New Jerseyans.

His decision will allow us to move forward with the important work of serving the people of our state.

Today, I want to share more about the investigative process and the path forward.

As a former federal prosecutor, I wanted to make sure everyone was treated fairly and justly.

This investigation was thorough and impartial.

It was initiated by the Chief Ethics Officer and conducted by a respected former state Attorney General.

It fully examined the evidence and followed the facts – wherever they led.

And it protected privacy. Because everyone deserves the right to be heard.

After I received the report and the facts were clear, I took action right away.

Let me be clear: all credible allegations of misconduct must be fully investigated and addressed.

In my Administration, we are committed to doing what is right, not what is politically expedient.



I will move swiftly and thoughtfully in choosing a new Lieutenant Governor, who will represent my Administration and the people of New Jersey with honor and integrity.

And as you know, we are just 39 days away from the midterm elections.

It is of paramount importance that our elections run smoothly – and that New Jerseyans have confidence in the officials overseeing them.

To that end, I have named Acting Comptroller Shirley Emehelu – who is with me today – to serve as Acting Secretary of State.

Shirley is a veteran of the U.S. Department of Justice and the New Jersey Attorney General’s Office.

She has the judgment to run our elections – and the strength to stand up to Trump’s attacks on voting.

I have full faith that Shirley and the team at the Department of State will make sure all eligible New Jerseyans can make their voices heard this November.

Our state’s public servants set the national standard.

They work incredibly hard every day to deliver for you.

As Governor, I’m focused on protecting and empowering them, so they can help even more New Jerseyans.

That is requiring a culture change in Trenton.

We can no longer tolerate the culture of silence, sweeping things under the rug, or kicking the can down the road.

New Jerseyans deserve fairness and accountability.

And we will work every single day to earn your trust.

I’ve taken many oaths over the course of my lifetime of service – in the Navy, as a federal prosecutor, in Congress, and now as Governor.

I take those commitments incredibly seriously.

So, here is my oath to you.

I will uphold the law.

I will lead with integrity.

And I will always put your interests first.

With that, I’ll hand things over to Shirley Emehelu.



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