

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Applauds Senate Confirmations of Mayor Christian Bollwage, George Helmy, and Joseph Kelley to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners

02/27/2023

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today applauded the Senate confirmations of Mayor Christian Bollwage, George Helmy, and Joseph Kelley to the Board of Commissioners of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Their nominations were confirmed today with unanimous support.

"Building on our world-class transportation infrastructure is critical to our economic growth and resilience as we shape the future of our region," **said Governor Murphy**. "It is essential that these efforts are led by officials who will stand up for the interests of our state and our residents. These individuals have dedicated their professional lives to public service and bring decades of experience in urban policy, economic development, and large-scale infrastructure projects. I am confident that they will be assets to the board and the millions of people it serves."

The Port Authority Board of Commissioners establishes the policies of the Port Authority and is responsible for adopting strategic plans, capital plans, and budgets of the agency. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was the nation's first bistate agency. The Governor of each state appoints six members of the agency's Board of Commissioners, subject to approval by each state's Senate. Commissioners serve as public officials without compensation for six-year terms.

"I am honored to serve on the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners and want to thank Governor Murphy for the opportunity to shape the future of our transportation infrastructure," **said Mayor Chris Bollwage**. "I am proud to have dedicated my professional life to improving our state and the lives of those who reside here, and I look forward to advocating on their behalf in this role."

"New Jersey is the heartbeat of our region and our infrastructure is the lifeblood that keeps both our economy and people moving," **said George Helmy**. "Under Governor Murphy's leadership, New Jersey is making transformative investments that will shape the future for generations. I am honored to serve on the board and look forward to the opportunity to build upon this progress."

"Reliable transportation infrastructure and a high functioning transit network are key to growing our economy," **said Joseph Kelley**. "Governor Murphy's commitment to this mission has enabled us to attract entirely new industries and expand others considerably. I'm extremely honored by the opportunity to build upon this progress and continue to serve the state I am proud to call home."

Chris Bollwage has served as the Mayor of Elizabeth for 30 years. Mayor Bollwage, a native of the city, was elected to his first term in 1992. He also serves as an adjunct professor in the Public Administration Department at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, where he teaches undergraduate courses in Public Administration. A graduate of Kean University, Mayor Bollwage holds a graduate degree with honors in Public Administration, has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award, and was later inducted into the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society. Before becoming Mayor, Chris Bollwage was a Councilman for 10 years, serving as Council President in 1989. He was also a member of the Elizabeth Planning Board for four years. Prior to holding elected office, the Mayor served as a sales, marketing and public relations representative for A&J Trading Corporation of Linden and Traffic Coordinator for Kerr Steamship Incorporated, New York City. Mayor Bollwage and his wife, Nancy, have a daughter, Jacqueline.

George Helmy currently serves as Chief of Staff to the Governor. Helmy is the first Arab American to serve on the Board of Commissioners of the Port Authority. A native of Jersey City, Helmy served as State Director to U.S. Senator Cory Booker for three years, serving on the Senator's senior staff and overseeing the day-to-day operations of his New Jersey offices. Prior to serving as State Director, he worked as Senator Booker's state office Deputy Chief of Staff for two years. Before serving in Senator Booker's office, he worked in the private sector with two Fortune 100 companies and served as an aide to the late U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg, handling issues such as gun safety and financial affairs. Helmy currently lives in Morris County with his wife and two children. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Rutgers University and a Master's degree from Harvard University.

Joseph Kelley currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Growth in the Governor's Office. In this role, he oversees major economic policy initiatives, manages large economic development projects, and works with the Governor on marketing the state to businesses around the world. Since joining the Murphy Administration, Kelley has served as the Governor's point person for several critical issues, including the economic restart and recovery from Covid-19; the development of the American Dream project; statewide transit-oriented development; corporate relations; and foreign direct investment, including the Governor's international trips to Germany, Israel, and India, which have brought over a thousand jobs to NJ. He previously owned and operated a public affairs consultancy, working with U.S. Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut, the 2012 Democratic Convention Host Committee, and NARAL Pro-Choice America, among others. In 2013, he was appointed by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer to midtown Manhattan's Community Board, a volunteer body with oversight of zoning, land use, liquor licensing, and other economic development issues. Mr. Kelley grew up in Morristown, NJ, and is a graduate of Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA. He resides in Hudson County with his wife and two children.

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