

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: September 25th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon, everybody. Sorry to be a minute or two behind. Happy Friday. Before I begin, the First Lady is with us today, so Tammy, great to have you with us. njprf.org continues to be an extraordinary place if you care about getting the state back on its feet; that's the New Jersey pandemic Relief Fund. Thank you to all your board members and team members for everything you do. But I also raise Tammy because I know that she would join me in sending best wishes to a couple of Gubernatorial colleagues and First Lady colleagues. On the left you've got Missouri Governor Mike Parson and his First Lady Teresa Parson. And on the right our good friends, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam and First Lady Pam Northam. I believe all four of these folks have tested positive for coronavirus within the past 48 hours. We've communicated with all four, in fact; we send our best wishes for speedy recovery. We wish them well. We will see them, I suspect, on an upcoming White House VTC, Judy and Pat, I'm sure, sooner than later.

This proves, by the way, this virus knows no bounds geographically, politically or otherwise. Ralph, by the way, is a medical doctor, a renowned pediatrician, so it also doesn't stop at the borders of, as we know painfully all too well, our healthcare community. We wish not just each of those couples well, but the people of their respective states as well, as so many of their residents continue to fight this pandemic, as they do right here.

Now back to New Jersey, I'm honored to be joined by the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, the State's Epidemiologist, another familiar face, Dr. Christina Tan. Great to have you, Tina. To my left, a guy who needs no introduction, the



Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Pat Callahan. Jared Maples, nice to have you with us, who directs the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. I mentioned the First Lady and the rest of the team members.

We're going to shift a lot of different gears today in a fairly short amount of time, so allow me to jump in and say that I want to reiterate the recent notifications from the Motor Vehicle Commission that regardless of what may be printed on your basic driver's license renewal notice, you may renew your license online and skip the trip to an agency altogether. We know that many motor motorists have received renewal notices that tell them they have to appear in person at an agency and that significant numbers of people are in line at their local agencies because of what's printed on that renewal notice. But again, regardless of what your renewal notice says, you do not need to go to an MVC agency to renew your basic driver's license. Again, you do not need to go to an MVC agency to renew your basic driver's license. These renewal notices were printed and sent long before the change in the law earlier this month. Your first step should be to visit that website, njmvc.gov and try your renewal online and to head out to an MVC agency only – only – if that transaction does not go through. So please folks, save the spot in line for someone who needs in-person assistance and has no choice.

Additionally, staying with the MVC, they have extended the deadline for commercial driver's licenses and commercial learner's permits which expired after March 1st to now December 31st, 2020. And MVC has added special senior citizens hours, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday, that's 2:00 to 4:00 every Tuesday and Thursday for new and used car registrations, so residents aged 65 and older can take advantage of those. Again, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Again, for both of these, please visit when in doubt njmvc.gov for more information.

We know there is a lot of frustration out there because of the lines. Make no mistake, we get it. You're frustrated, I am really frustrated. I know Chief Administrator Sue Fulton is frustrated. I know the dedicated employees at MVC are frustrated. None of us are happy with the current state of affairs. Again, it's to be expected in many respects given the tsunami that they're digging through, but I want to make it abundantly clear and very explicitly clear that I'm not happy about this either.

We are all in this together, having said that, so I would ask you this: a little kindness and courtesy will go a long way. The folks at the MVC are doing their jobs as best as they can, as they continue digging out from under an unprecedented backlog, but we will get there and we will all get there together.

Next, again switching gears, as was reported yesterday, the Department of Labor released its weekly report that showed an uptick in the number of initial unemployment claims for the prior week to 24,663. That's a one-week increase of roughly 5,000 claims. This is not relegated to just New Jersey, as our statistics follow a national increase in new claims. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the department has cleared almost, you can see, just under 1.4 million New Jerseyans to receive their benefits and 96% of those deemed eligible have received at least one payment. So between the State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and extended state benefits, along with the accompanying federal benefits, New Jersey families have received \$15.65 billion to help them through this time.

I must also note that our application to participate in FEMA's new Lost Wages Supplemental Assistance Program has been approved for the current maximum of six weeks, and the department is currently getting the programming it needs in place to provide eligible claimants \$300 per week, in addition to their other unemployment benefits. As the department has to develop entirely new programming to deliver these funds, they expect to be ready next month to distribute not these in weekly chunks, but in one lump-sum payment.

And as we do every week, I want to give a big shout out to Commissioner Rob Asaro-Angelo and the entire team at the Department of Labor for their tireless and ongoing work to ensure that every New Jersey family receives every dollar in support and benefits which they deserve. Before we move on, I want to just say this. I'm happy we got our application approved for the FEMA \$300. It's more complicated.

You just heard me say that we have to develop new programs in the Department of Labor. But folks, in Congress, please hear us, not just from New Jersey, but from every American state. We weren't the only ones, as I mentioned, that saw an increase in claims. It's across the country. Individuals are running out of gas. The economy therefore is running out of out of gas. This is not complicated, Congress, particularly to the Republican leadership in the Senate. This is the moment. This is the time to go big. This is the moment to

pass a big federal stimulus bill. I give Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer an enormous amount of credit here, and I know she has now re-upped yet another package to be voted on. This is the moment that our folks who are unemployed need us. This is the moment when our small businesses, restaurants and others need us. This is the time when states, counties, municipalities need government support to keep the firefighters, the police, the EMS, the educators, the healthcare workers, to keep them employed and delivering the services at this most important moment in our state's and country's history. This is not the time to shirk responsibility in Washington. This is the time to step up, step up big and deliver exactly what every American state and every American needs.

Next, we are extremely pleased by yesterday's federal court ruling extending the 2020 census through to the end of October. That's the good news. But I'm in the hope for the best, prepare for the worst. We are not going to let up in our work to make sure every New Jerseyan is properly counted by September 30th. If we get extended, I'll be the happiest guy in New Jersey. We can't count on that. So if you have not yet to be counted or if you know someone who hasn't responded, there's no better time to act than right now. That website is sitting right there in front of us, 2020census.gov.

To put it succinctly, this is our last push, not just for this month or this year, but for the next decade. What you do to get counted will impact our state for the next literally 10 years. The amount of federal funds we receive for our schools, our transportation systems, our healthcare and on and on and on, including, by the way, our representation in Congress. Responding to the census is our civic duty. It is safe, it is secure, it is vitally important. So far, 68.7% of New Jerseyans have self-responded through that website, 2020census.gov, exceeding our self-response rate from the past three censuses going back to 1990. Because so many of you are working with census takers who are knocking on doors, more than 97% of New Jerseyans have been counted.

But not everyone, everywhere, has yet done their part and our census team will be pushing hard through places like next five days Jersey City, Plainfield, Paterson, Atlantic City, Salem and Bridgeton, New Brunswick, Long Branch, Trenton among numerous other communities which have been historically hard to count and that have not yet matched their 2010 benchmarks. I was at a fabulous census event earlier this week with my dear friend Mayor and Senator Brian Stack in Union City, when it works -- our census team from the Department of State were there, community activists, elected officials, faith leaders, union leaders -- when it works, the count goes up and I saw with my own eyes.

There are quite literally -- never mind that one -- there are quite literally hundreds of census events planned to make sure everyone fulfills their civic responsibility to be counted. And to find one, an event near you, head over to census.nj.gov. Do we have that website, Dan? [Census.nj.gov](https://census.nj.gov). Let's get that one up there. You've got the 2020 up there. [Census.nj.gov](https://census.nj.gov) is the place to go to find the event. Again, if you want to get counted, don't wait for a census taker to knock on your door. Go to that website which is 2020census.gov. That's how you get counted. Again, if you want to know where an event is near you, it's census.nj.gov.

Okay, next, I want to provide a quick update on our contact tracing efforts, Judy, and I know you'll probably add some color here. Over the past week, we added another nine contact tracers to the community contact tracing corps, bringing the total number of tracers on the ground to 1,873. And importantly, over the past week we saw a big increase in the number of people who took the call from contact tracers. Our tracers were able to follow up in more than two-thirds of cases, and 55% of those cases were followed up within the first 24 hours.

We do, however, continue to have challenges in getting those our contact tracers talk with to provide contacts for follow up. Last week, 58% of those contacted refused to cooperate with our contact tracers. That's a 2% increase from the previous week. We say it again: please take the call and cooperate with our contact tracers. No one is on a witch hunt and no one has any concern other than protecting your health, your family's health, your community's health, period. As Judy always says, take the call and work with our contact tracers.

Finally, before we turn to the overnight numbers, I have extended the public health emergency in our state for an additional 30 days. These declarations, by the way I've said this before, unless extended expire after 30 days. And as we have mentioned, again, today's action means that we continue to be vigilant and prepared

and ready to act should there be a new outbreak. It also continues the authority of the Department of Health, under Judy's leadership, to coordinate our health system's response to this emergency. We can't do a lot of what we do without that declaration.

So with that, Judy, let's look at the overnight numbers. We're going to talk a fair amount about these today. Today we're reporting an additional 612 positive test results with the removal, by the way, and we're going to start talking about this more regularly and we're not the only state that's doing this. We're constantly making sure that we have our data exactly right. We're removing 88 duplicate or out-of-state reports over the past two days, so our total is now is 202,100. Judy is going to go through this in some amount of detail, but it's fair to say we've got a few counties that are rising to a level of concern. Gloucester, Ocean certainly is probably our biggest concern, Judy; Monmouth, where we live, and Bergen I think in fourth place. Middlesex, sorry, Middlesex and then Bergen. It would be led by Ocean. Judy will go through the past few days.

But folks, this is clear evidence that we are not out of the woods. So whether it's through worship, whether it's through indoor home gatherings, regardless of what the reasons, adjacent activities to either school or sports teams, we are not out of the woods. Judy, 612 today and we had 588 yesterday. Some of them were a few duplicates, but there's no other way to put that, that's 1,200 cases in two days. I hope folks are getting this and understanding that we are not out of the woods yet.

Again, some decent data otherwise. The overall positivity rate from September 21st was 2.2%. That was down from the day before. It's still higher than we want it but it's among the best in the nation. Statewide rate of transmission remains stuck in that 1.15 level. Judy had predicted this, it's been sort of in the 1.05 to 1.15 level for the past couple of weeks, and that's influenced by the number of tests so that's not surprising, I think, to any of us.

233 confirmed COVID-positive patients in our hospitals, 172 persons under investigation awaiting tests, that total is 405 in all hospitals reported. That's a pretty encouraging number, 75 of whom were in intensive care, 32 of whom were on a ventilator. With the heaviest of hearts we are reporting seven additional fatalities. That brings the total of confirmed to 14,306. The newly reported deaths, Judy, I'm showing all occurred between September 14th and 23rd of those seven. The number of probable deaths remains at 1,791. Again, at the risk of comparing apples to oranges, but to give you a spot sense of the reality, there were 10 deaths reported in our hospitals yesterday but again, they are not part of the numbers you see in front of you. They have yet to be confirmed.

So as we do every day, let's remember three more of the more than 14,300 lives, of New Jerseyans in our family we've lost to COVID-19. We start today by remembering Mary von Riegen. If I were still in Germany, Tammy, I'd say Mary von Riegen. Born in Texas, Mary found her way to New Jersey, settling in Marlboro. For more than 20 years, she worked at Kilmer Chiropractic Center in nearby Eatontown. But she took special joy in her annual fall visits to Maine with her husband Bill. And by the way, Bill got very sick from COVID. He is still slogging through his recovery. Please keep him in your prayers. And she was an avid reader who passed that love on to her daughter Carrie. Carrie is on the left. Carrie lives in Forked River, and I had the honor of speaking with her on Wednesday, and she leaves both Bill and Carrie behind.

She was also a true animal lover, especially for her feline friends. As much as Mary will be remembered for her kind, giving and loving nature, she'll also be remembered as a fighter. That trait was on display over the past several years when Mary underwent a kidney transplant and several subsequent surgeries and procedures and never uttered a word of complaint. I might add, Carrie gave her her kidney. By the way, Judy, as you've said many times and I live it in my own self, kidney disease of one form or another is a particular exposure to COVID-19. Mary also leaves behind Carrie's husband Michael and her grandchildren Victoria, Elizabeth and Michael. She's also survived by her stepdaughter Mary Lou and her stepsons, William and Robert and their families. Mary was 72 years old. We thank her for making New Jersey her home over these past decades. May God bless her and her memory, and watch over her family.

Next we recall Sandra Hardy-Rogers, age 56, of the Bayville section of Berkeley Township in Ocean County. Tammy and I know that part of the state very well. She was one of our healthcare heroes, an emergency room technician at Community Medical Center in Toms River. Sandra was on the job until she herself was taken by

COVID-19. She passed at Community Medical Center after being cared for by so many of her colleagues. Those colleagues, by the way, started a GoFundMe fundraiser to help Sandra's family. I encourage you to check it out and step up.

Sandra, as I mentioned, was only 56 years old. She was born, as they say, across the pond in the United Kingdom. By the way, she was a fan of the Manchester United Football Club, and came to the United States to work as a nanny, but obviously she found her life's calling here. She leaves behind the two guys with her in that picture her husband Joe, with whom I had the great honor of speaking late on Wednesday, he works for the postal service; and their 16-year-old son Brett, keep that lad in your prayers. She's also survived by her father, Cyril.

Joe put his wife's legacy in the following words, and I quote Joe, "She put others before herself in all aspects of her life." Wow, what a good model for the rest of us. We thank Sandra for her years of service to the health and wellness of our fellow New Jerseyans. May God bless her and watch over her and her guys.

And finally today, we also remember Sean Keville of New Providence. Sean, you should take a long look at this if you think anybody is immune from this virus. Sean was just 47 years old. He was born in Pennsylvania but made his name on the football field as the quarterback at the Peddie School in nearby Hightstown. His football career continued at Moravian College in Pennsylvania, I think in Bethlehem, is that right? Where he set numerous school records and was named a Division 3 All-American. In 2007, he was inducted into the Moravian Hall of Fame and the Middle Atlantic Conferences inducted him posthumously into its Hall of Fame as well.

After his undergraduate days were over, he earned an MBA at Fordham and then became a Chartered Financial Analyst. He started a career in business with what used to be an archrival of ours, Morgan Stanley, but that turned out to be an extraordinarily good decision. Why? It turned out that that is where he met his wife Madeline, with him on the left there, and ultimately ended up, after he left Morgan Stanley, as a Senior Vice President at the Chatham-based investment management firm of R. Seelaus & Co.

Business was work, but family was Sean's true love, especially time spent with his daughter Maggie. And Maggie, bless that girl, is 10 years old, and keep her and her mom in your prayers. And he always made time for her school events, dance recitals and competitions. He also remained a huge football fan and even though he was a born and raised diehard Eagles fan, he made the assimilation into a family of Giants fans. I can only imagine what those first few moments were like. And in 2018, he had the good fortune to be able to attend Super Bowl 52 to watch his Eagles finally win it all. Sean, particularly given the results of that day. I hope you're watching from heaven. You'll never hear me say these words perhaps ever again, but fly, Eagles, fly.

Sean now leaves behind both Madeline with whom I had the honor of speaking on Wednesday, and I have to say, a tough call, as tough as I've had. And Maggie, look at that little princess, as well as his mother Patricia, his stepfather Bob. He also leaves his siblings Kimberly and Ryan, as well as numerous family members on Madeline's side. Numerous does not do it justice, she has a massive family, and he leaves behind countless friends from every step in his life.

I must reiterate that Sean was only 47 years old. I asked Madeline, did he have any underlying health issues? He did not. I repeat, he did not. This is a star athlete in the prime of his life with no underlying issues, who has been cut down and lost to COVID-19. He was taken far too young. May God bless him and his family and watch over all of them.

And may He watch over every family mourning the loss of a loved one due to this virus. I have to say the good news is, a lot of people recover and I want to give a shout out to a buddy of mine, Pete Strumola from Bloomfield just got back home a couple of days ago. Pete was one of the longest hospitalized patients, Judy, in the entire state since COVID began. He's a good guy, and keep Pete and all the others, the overwhelming others who do get through this and recover, keep them all in your prayers.

Next, switching gears, I want to highlight another of the entrepreneurs who has partnered with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to keep their business strong and viable in the face of the unprecedented challenges this pandemic has created. Meet Brian Mabutas, Jersey born and raised, and a graduate of the Rutgers Newark Business School. Brian is the founder and creative director behind the

Edison-based motorsports apparel brand Eat Sleep Race, which he created in 2001 as a way to turn his own love of racing into a career. And as the brand grew, Brian expanded the business, forming the Fast Kids Club to inspire the next generation of racing enthusiasts.

Eat Sleep Race is also building partnerships and sponsorships with professional drivers and teams. The pandemic put everything Brian built into jeopardy. By the way, a lot of his revenues were coming from popping up and having a presence at racing events. Needless to say, there haven't been many of them. He turned to the EDA and he received a small business loan that is allowing him to keep the brand running while meeting its expenses. I had the pleasure of checking in with Brian on Wednesday, and to wish him the best as he keeps his business moving. I want to make sure you all know his website, eatsleeprace.com. Fairly straightforward, Pat, eatsleeprace.com.

I also asked Brian, I said, "Brian, if you could race one car or drive one car on the planet, what would it be?" And it was the American-made, one of the great muscle cars, the Dodge Viper. One of the coolest cars I think ever made in America. I encourage all small business owners to go to njeda.com to see what programs may be available to help your businesses. Again, njeda.com.

And finally, for me today, to all of the members of our Jewish community, to the Jewish brothers and sisters in New Jersey, which has the fourth-largest and second per capita Jewish community in the entire United States of America as they prepare to observe Yom Kippur beginning sundown on Sunday, we wish you an easy fast. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for the year to come. As you worship, folks, please, as I would say to any faith, please do so carefully and responsibly.

With that, please help me welcome the woman who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Thank you, Governor, and good afternoon. Well as the numbers show, we are seeing an uptick in cases in several counties. Cases have increased in Monmouth, Ocean, Gloucester, Middlesex and Bergen. We review all new cases daily, on a county-by-county basis. Since Monday the 21st, Ocean reports 439 new positive cases; Monmouth, 248; Middlesex, 220; Gloucester, 130. The main age group for the cases in Ocean and Monmouth are 18 to 29 years old.

In Ocean, we are tracking between 100 and 150 new cases a day and of that number, at least half or more of those cases are in Lakewood, and the positivity rate in Lakewood is also increasing, which is a concern. To assist Ocean County, we have sent 6,000 test kits to enable increased testing. We have also dispatched additional contact tracers, and we will be sending more next week.

In Monmouth, we believe the increase may be related to various activities such as house gatherings and business operations. We are reminding people that social distancing and masking is critical to protect people when they gather and participate in group activities. Monmouth has requested additional contact tracers as well, and we are working to fill their request.

We are keeping a close eye on increases in Gloucester County. As I've said before previously, student housing both on and off-campus at Rowan was related to the increase. University officials have worked closely with county and our state health officials and they are seeing a significant decline in new cases.

Working with our communities is a top priority for us, and along those lines, as part as of these COVID-19 briefings, I tried to share information about the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color in our state. The same longstanding inequities that have contributed to health disparities affecting racial and ethnic groups have also put them at peril for COVID-19. These racial and ethnic populations are also disproportionately represented among essential workers and those that are unable to work from home, as employees of places such as healthcare facilities, factories, farms and grocery stores. Barriers to seeking care, such as lack of access to healthcare services or insurance or sick leave are also drivers of adverse outcomes among minority populations.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we also must recognize that Hispanic residents have been born a tremendous burden of COVID-19 in our state. Nationally, case rates are nearly three times higher for Latino persons compared to the White population. Hospitalizations are 4.6 times higher, and deaths are over 1.1

time higher. A recent study by the CDC that examined deaths among those under 21 found that 45% were Hispanic individuals.

In New Jersey, Latino men have the highest mortality rates compared to other groups. Hispanics are more likely to die younger as a result of COVID-19 than their White and Asian counterparts. 47% of our deaths are among Hispanic men 20 to 34 years of age. Among deaths of those under 21 in our state, more than half were Hispanic children and adolescents.

The Hispanic population is more likely to have chronic conditions that make them more at risk for complications of COVID-19. The population is twice as likely to suffer from asthma compared to the White population, and 33% of Hispanic adults are considered obese. The department has been working to ensure access to testing for the Latinex population. We have ramped up testing in Elizabeth Paterson, Newark, Trenton, Atlantic City and Camden.

The department has worked with our federally qualified health centers to ensure that seasonal workers at farms have access to testing and received education on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As part of our testing and tracing public awareness campaign, a special focus was placed on reaching Latino residents. In addition to advertising placements in Spanish and other languages, the department translated forms, educational materials and other documents. Our own department's Chief of Staff Martinez-Mejia has appeared on Univision and Telemundo several times to share important messages about COVID-19.

Additionally, we placed an emphasis on including language specifically for undocumented populations, to let them know that their immigration status will not be questioned when getting tested or participating in contact tracing. We also work to ensure that when setting up alternate care sites such as the field medical stations, that culturally competent care was provided, to ensure a welcoming place to heal our diverse populations.

Eliminating health disparities among New Jerseyans is an overarching goal of the Department of Health. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities in our state, and we have a lot of work ahead of us to improve outcomes for all communities of color.

Onto my daily report, the Governor has shared 405 hospitalizations, 75 individuals in critical care and 43% of those critical care patients are on ventilators. That's a slight uptick from the prior two weeks. There are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. There are a total of 57 cases in our state.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths reported in terms of race and ethnicity. We are still reporting White 54.1%, Black 18.3%, Hispanic 20.3%, Asian 5.5% and other 1.9%. The veterans homes and psychiatric numbers have stayed the same.

The state's positivity rate as of September 25th is 2.2%. The North reports 1.54, the Central part of the state which includes Ocean and Monmouth reports 3.07, and the Southern part of the state 2.37. That concludes my daily update. Stay safe and remember for each other, for us all, please take the call.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, thank you. I can't thank you enough. Today, it's on behalf of especially our Latino brothers and sisters in this Hispanic Heritage Month, we're right in the middle of it, for calling out and reminding us of the disparities that this virus hasn't created, but has laid bare. It's the whole range of things, social determinants of health, the reality of how folks live, access to healthcare, the whole series of factors that you laid out, as you do literally every day. Thank you for that and everything else.

Secondly, we had a really, I thought I hosted a really good call with Dr. Tony Fauci yesterday, which I think touched on a lot of the things that we've been talking about. My big takeaways were, number one, we enter the colder season in about as good a shape as any state. But secondly, you can't let your guard down, you've got to stay vigilant. Thirdly, I thought he was really good at walking through the vaccine process and all the checks and balances, I found it very comforting. But as I said yesterday with him and Judy, you've reminded us and you hosted a comprehensive meeting a week ago today, we're going to have our own process and our own checks and balances not just on efficacy, but also on equity and other factors in terms of how we think about not just is it safe, but what's the order of distribution, etc.

But then the other final takeaway I had, other than I asked him, what's his secret? He's turning 80 in December, and he looks like he's about 55 years old. He gave us a little sense of his secrets. This notion that once there's a vaccine that were in Lala Land is just not the case. I don't want anyone, whenever that comes, and we don't know yet when it comes, although he was pretty confident given the companies – many of them have big New Jersey presences I might add, including J&J which is headquartered here, he was pretty confident and optimistic that we would have something in the next quarter, and then by a year from that quarter at latest, or he thought, I don't want to put words in his mouth, that you'd have vaccine available for the broader population.

But importantly, he said, don't kid yourself that there's a bright line and once you've got a vaccination we can go back to doing everything that we used to do. You know, the notion of face covering, social distancing, washing hands with soap and water, how we think about shaking hands, giving people a kiss, whatever it might be, the vaccine is a huge weapon, but it's a weapon in a broader fight. As he reminded, I got my flu vaccine, flu shot a week ago Saturday, which is great, but we still have the flu every year. I thought it was a good conversation and balanced. What we've been trying to do, I think every day, nothing but the facts, even if they're tough and ugly, but also a path forward. A path of hope of how we get to a better place, all of us together.

Thank you for everything, Judy, and I wanted to make sure I said that. Pat Callahan, great to have you with us, as always. Anything on compliance, other matters, and you've got to give a commercial for a family that's near and dear to your heart and near and dear to Tammy's and mine, and a little bit of a cool event in there, in the honor of one of those family members tomorrow in Seaside Heights.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. Glad to report that in the last two days no Executive Order compliance charges were filed or reported to the ROIC. Compliance as the governor always usually states, has been pretty phenomenal in the last few weeks.

With regard to the event that the Governor is alluding to, that is the Seaside Semper Five which is being held next Saturday morning. I'm not sure that you can register in person anymore, but online at Seaside Semper. It's a week from tomorrow, October 3rd, seasidesemperfive.org. That's hosted by Marine Raider Foundation, which started in 2014, and I think has raised more than \$250,000 to support the families of marines and sailors, those that are ill, wounded or unfortunately that made the ultimate sacrifice protecting our nation.

The reason why we're so connected to it, the First Lady, the Governor, Director Maples, the Attorney General, we ran in it two years ago to honor the memory of Trooper Brian McNally, who was not only a New Jersey State Trooper but also served as a Captain in the United States Marine Corps Reserves, and on May 21st, 2018 was on his way home from military training and was tragically killed in a car accident in Pennsylvania. We have come to know very well his father Kevin, his mother Barbara, his sister Maureen, a phenomenal family.

You can see why Brian was so dedicated to service of not only his state but of his country. He stood at 6'9, and we call the team that we register under Team Big B for an obvious reason, and his mother advised me this week that we have over 70 runners signed up for Team Big B. Those can run or walk virtually as well, given the unprecedented pandemic that we're in, but we look forward to being on the boardwalk down there in Seaside and supporting not only the event and Seaside Semper Five, the Marine Raider Foundation, but certainly the McNally family that are just a phenomenal epitome of what it means to be from the great state of New Jersey. Thanks, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, thank you so much. What's the website again, one more time?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Seasidesemperfive.org, five spelled out.

Governor Phil Murphy: God bless Brian, and his mother, father and sister have become very good friends of ours and are extraordinary people. Tammy, actually I'm not back to running 5-Ks, I'm running but I'm not back to where I need to be and this one, we're going to watch you from afar a week from tomorrow, but Tammy is running in one also that's an important Memorial tomorrow in Robbinsville. Dan, can you fire up the name of that one? It's a 5-K in Robbinsville tomorrow morning and we'll give their website a shout out. It's in honor, in memory of Samantha Johnson. Her dad Seymour and I have kept on with each other. You may remember that Samantha was the blessed gal who was at the University of South Carolina who mistakenly got into a car

that she thought was an Uber and she was killed. Her memory, her blessed life with her parents great leadership and conviction has spawned the What's your name? law, not just in New Jersey, but that's becoming a national phenomenon and an industry standard. Tomorrow's run is in honor of Samantha, so God rest her soul and God rest Brian McNally's soul.

We'll be with you virtually tomorrow and Sunday, unless you hear otherwise. We will be back, we believe, Monday at 1:00, although we're awaiting notification of whether or not there's going to be a White House VTC. They've got a few things going on there. Dan Bryan has just given me, It's What's My Name 5-K. I should have known that. That's tomorrow in Robbinsville, and please check that out, even if you can't make it, a donation in Samantha's name would mean a lot to her family and to the cause. Again, assume that we're at 1:00 on Monday unless you hear from us between now and then. And again, we'll be with you virtually tomorrow and Sunday. With that, Brent, good afternoon. Brent I'm actually serious about this, the Mets, are they in or out?

Q&A Session

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: They're razor thin, like they'd have to have other teams lose a lot and they'd have to win everything, so.

Governor Phil Murphy: Do you like the fact the new owner wants to put Sandy Alderson back?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: I do. I'm very happy with the direction of the team, for what my opinion matters, though.

Governor Phil Murphy: You're on the board of the team, I just wanted to know what your vote was.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: So three things I want to get your reaction on. What was your reaction to the recent shooting in Asbury Park? Two, NJ Transit seeking a gag order against Nancy Erica Smith, and your reaction to the decision in Kentucky on the Breonna Taylor case?

Governor Phil Murphy: I have not seen the video in Asbury Park, but I'm told it is quite disturbing. It's another data point that validates the step we took a couple years ago, at this point, to make sure that if there's any officer-involved shooting or fatality even if it's not from a shooting, that it is automatically put into a separate independent process, which ends up with a grand jury, no matter what. I'm not going to comment specifically on the case. Again, I've not seen the video but I'm told it's quite disturbing. Any loss of life is a tragedy so we mourn the loss of life here. And again, I count my blessings every day that we have that law in place in New Jersey. It is, if not the strongest, among the strongest of its kind in America.

I'll put aside the fact that Nancy Erica Smith is a friend of ours. She and her husband Neil are good friends of ours; that I'm a big fan of hers; that she has led the nation in so many respects, particularly on workplace matters. And ironically, I might add, she has I think led the nation on the pushback on so-called gag orders. I'll put all that aside. I was dumbfounded when I saw that NJ Transit had taken that step. Literally, I could not believe it and I'm just gratified that it appears that they have pulled that back, as they well should have.

So Breonna Taylor, I have a couple of thoughts. I mentioned this the other day, there was a Black Lives Matter gathering here in Trenton. The Attorney General Gurbir Grewal was with me, and they, that way down the street, painting on West State Street in front of the African American Chamber of Commerce, John Harman, Reverend Steffie Bartley hosted a bunch of us, both elected officials, faith leaders and public citizens. I said a couple of things which I'll repeat, but I want to add one other comment. Any loss of life is a tragedy, and certainly Breonna Taylor was cut down in her prime with so much in front of her. She had such promise. It is clear to me from the outside looking in that justice was not properly served here. Hard to say otherwise. With a heavy heart, I say we all have to stay on the road together toward that better day of complete civil rights and social justice, and complete removal of the stain of racism.

Breonna Taylor's life mattered. Black Lives Matter, period, full stop. But I also have to channel Martin Luther King because as I understand it, some police officers were shot in the aftermath of the decision coming out. I know we are still on that journey. I know we have a long way to go. I know that woman should be alive, but the answer is not shooting members of law enforcement, please God. We have to channel King. You can't answer hate with hate. You can't answer darkness with darkness. You answer darkness with light, hate with love, that we stay on this road together.

As awful as that verdict may have been, and how could you look at that and conclude otherwise? One guy's opinion, that is not the answer. That is not the answer. and bless that gal, Breonna Taylor, who was by all accounts an extraordinary human being, and bless all the other lives like that who we have lost, overwhelmingly young persons of color. Please, sir.

Reporter: Believe it or not Gov, I've got nothing for you today.

Governor Phil Murphy: Is that true? Okay. Dan or I will slip you a \$20 right when the program is over. Thank you. Have a good weekend. Daniel.

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Hi, Governor. With the budget, are you going to line item veto anything? Senate President said that there needs to be some fiscal reforms going forward? Which ones are you agreeing to? I know there are a number of things in the Path to Progress.

With Ocean County, the outbreaks there in Lakewood, is this at all related to the High Holy Days? I know that there have been issues back in March and April with compliance. Is that at all playing into this since Lakewood evidently made up a good chunk of them?

With the federal aid, it looks like the state isn't really in a position where it needs the federal aid. At this point, it just would be used to pay down the debt, but it doesn't look as dire as it was when you said in April the state could have to --

Governor Phil Murphy: It doesn't look what, sorry?

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: It doesn't look as dire as you said in April when you warned the state would have to cut and cut and cut, just to quote you, "Without the aid I would have to make these cuts." That's not happening, so does the state need the aid, or did it ever even need the aid?

Last, will you sign the plastic bag bill? What are your thoughts on that?

Governor Phil Murphy: On the plastic bag?

Daniel Munoz, NJBIZ: Yeah, the one that passed yesterday?

Governor Phil Murphy: I will sign the budget, I think early week. Matt Platkin is with us. I think early week, but I will break with tradition and say that I will be signing the budget as is. And again, I want to reiterate, given the fiscal meltdown compared only to the 1930s and the 1860s, which led us among other things -- and this anticipates, Daniel, to some extent an answer to one of your later questions -- that led us to seek the authority which we have to borrow but also has contributed to an extremely challenging budget reality, including a nine-month fiscal year. We kind of don't even talk about that. That's the only time in our state's history that that has happened.

Having said all of that, I want to say two things. One is we were able to continue to fund a lot of the programs that make the state so great: public education, pre-K, infrastructure, so many other initiatives. And secondly, I want to repeat my thanks to our Legislative colleagues, the Senate President, the Speaker, both budget chairs, the spirit of teamwork, the spirit of trying to find common ground in the midst of this pandemic was outstanding.

As it relates to reforms and whatnot, yes, we had good conversations among the Senate President, the Speaker and myself as general matters, but we have already done a significant amount together and we each committed we wanted to do more. So in the category of what we've done together, in addition to making three consecutive all-time record pension payments, we have meaningfully reformed and reduced healthcare costs related to state workers without putting the burden of those reductions on the shoulders of the workers themselves. We've just been smarter about it. We've been more efficient. We've been counting pennies, and it's added up to a lot of savings. The Senate President, the Speaker both deserve credit, our team does as well. We're going to continue. We made a commitment to each other that we'd continue to try to find ways to continue those reforms.

Judy, I'm going to skip Lakewood and ask you to hit that in a second, if you don't mind. But clearly Ocean County and especially Lakewood are clearly our hotspots right now. I'm sure there is some amount of relationship to worship for Rosh Hashanah. We have Yom Kippur coming up. But I say that advisedly, because

every religion in this state has a right to practice and worship in its holidays, on its days of worship. So I don't want anybody, I don't want a speck of anybody in this state saying, "Hey, see, it's because of them" or whatever. We're working aggressively with the community, with faith leaders, with community leaders. We've got a school district there, which is a big one. But I want everybody to leave any prejudices or biases, check them at the door. This is about public health and we're doing our very best. Having said that, we need as I said earlier, everybody to worship and observe holidays responsibly, including from a public health standpoint.

We still need the federal aid, Daniel. I mean, we're borrowing \$4.5 billion, none of us happily. This is not reflexively something we wake up wanting to do. Certainly if we got federal aid, certainly if the revenue projections are above what the revenues that I'll be certifying, will we be, in our very highest priorities, looking at debt reduction? You betcha. But because we've had the ability to borrow that money, we've been able to stave off, for now, an even bigger meltdown. But we desperately need the money. It's not just New Jersey. It's government in all states, it's government at all levels. But I mentioned this earlier, it's folks who are unemployed. It's small businesses, it's restaurants, transit systems, healthcare systems. We desperately still need it and I plead with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle in Washington to get there.

No comments specific on the plastic bag legislation, which we normally don't comment on. But I will tell you, I was really happy to see that. It's something that we worked closely on, John Mckeon and I were exchanging notes yesterday. I give him a shout out, all the other folks who were leaders on this, the advocates. I will say this, if I do sign it, it'll be the strongest of its kind in the United States of America. Assuming that happens, that's another badge of honor and another big step toward that environmental reality that we're all so desperately trying to achieve in the state.

Judy, anything else on Lakewood or Ocean County, or Tina?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: I think it's important to note that I've been on calls with the community and religious leaders and their collaboration and cooperation is extraordinary. They're just as interested as anyone to protect the communities that they're in service to. Right before I got here we were on an hour call, what more can we do? How can we cooperate? We want to increase testing and we want complete compliance with contact tracing.

Governor Phil Murphy: Amen, and again, worship responsibly. You've got also, I forget what the number is, it's probably 75 or 80 school districts that are full in person, at last count 76 and Lakewood is one of them. That's something I know Judy is watching carefully. Thank you, sir. Charlie, we come to you. Good afternoon.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Good afternoon, Governor. I've got to ask, do you have any response to the President's comments on the peaceful transfer of power?

On September 2, you said we were quote, "Well into Stage 3", but as of today, the COVID-19 dashboard that the state runs still indicates we're in Stage 2. Can you clarify what stage the state is in?

In August, you stated that, quote, "All counties must ensure that 50% of their polling places are open." But the Executive Order you signed allowed for an exception that some counties have done. Do you know how many counties actually achieved that 50% number?

Do you have any information or maybe the Colonel, any information or comment on the September 13th mass shooting in New Brunswick where nine people were shot and two people unfortunately passed?

And finally, the environmental justice legislation you signed, what parameters would decide whether that legislation applies to, for instance, the Rutgers Cancer Institute Power Plant Project in New Brunswick?

Governor Phil Murphy: Charlie, number one, I've said this a couple of times over the past couple of days, the last thing we need right now is a further undermining of well-functioning, for either decades or centuries, institutions in our country. On the heavy heart list with the administration since they got into office, there's been a consistent theme of challenging the validity of institutions: Department of Justice, FBI, health officials in Washington, at places like the CDC, NIH, NATO, and now this. I would just ask, and many of us have bullhorns, no one's got a bigger bullhorn than the President. Please, enough. There's no evidence that backs

this up. We have a model in place that we feel really good about that is both safe, secure, but also will lead to a big turnout, without any care as to who wins or loses races. We want it to work and we want it to be democracy expanding and doing it at a time where we can protect public health.

So I would just say this, it isn't – at the end of the day for me, this isn't about the President or what he says. I find the conclusion really being, it's about us. It's up to us to turn out, however way you're going to vote, and vote, regardless of which side you're on so the result is that the turnout is high and the result is unmistakable, one way or the other. So again, with all due respect to what he's saying and drawing attention there, I frankly think the conclusion is, it's all of us. I don't care if you're a Democrat or Republican, or you're not in either party, the key is to get out and vote, whether it's by mail or in person. Do it safely, do it with health in mind, but vote. That's to me the ultimate consequence.

I think I said on September 2nd that we're in all intents and purposes in Stage 3, but we're not there officially yet. I think the reason is that there remain a couple of steps that we have not yet taken that would make us completely in Stage 3. Matt Platkin can correct me if I'm wrong, and we will come back to you if we think it's otherwise.

I assume you meant on polling places for the coming election, for the November 3rd election and you're absolutely right. We've asked counties to be at least 50% capacity, and each municipality to have at least one polling location. I know all the counties and the clerks are in process on that directive. I don't have a specific number for you, but we can come back and get that for you unless either of you guys do, but Dan Bryan will come back to you, as he always does.

Pat, I will skip and have you clean up and finish up with the September 13th tragic shooting in New Brunswick. September 13th early in the morning, I might add.

Environmental justice legislation, there may be a specific element of that project that I'm not aware of, but I believe every project prospectively is subject to that. I'll have the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, Catherine McCabe, or Dan come back to if I'm mistaken on that for some reason.

Pat, would you mind commenting on the September 13th shootings in New Brunswick?

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Yes, sir. I know it's 12 days into it, Charlie, and it still remains an extremely active investigation with ballistic and forensic evidence being analyzed, interviews, the search for video. That's probably about the extent that I'm going to comment on, but still a very active and ongoing investigation there and one that we're involved with too at the State Police level.

Governor Phil Murphy: I don't want to put you in a bad spot, Pat, but I believe it has been determined, and it was determined relatively quickly that no Rutgers community members were a part of that. That was my sense, at least and you live there so you're close to the ground. I believe that is the case. I believe Rutgers has said that, but I don't want to make you have to --

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: I would hesitate to respond, Gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: As usual, I'm getting you into trouble. So with that, I'm going to mask up. I want to thank Judy and Tina, as always. I wish you a good weekend and I thank you for your leadership. Pat to you, Jared, Matt, Ashwin, I didn't appropriately acknowledge, I didn't do one of these, I should say; I assume your baby's fine. First Lady Tammy Murphy, thank you for being here, njprf.org. That's the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund, njprf.org. They're doing incredible things.

Yeah, so Judy, I think the note to leave it on is we've got to be careful. I'm glad Dr. Fauci who, this guy's Yoda as it relates to viruses. He's saying we enter the colder weather, we enter the height of the flu season, we enter a potential second wave in very good shape by any measure. But it's also undeniable that we're not out of the woods and we've got parts of the state that we're watching very carefully. Ocean, Monmouth where we live, Gloucester, Middlesex, and to a lesser extent Bergen, but those are the five of the 21 that are highest on our list of watching carefully.

Folks, please, please keep doing what you've been doing, which has been extraordinary, both in compliance by institutions as well as by you all by the millions as individuals. We wish you, our Jewish brothers and sisters, a particular heartfelt blessing and wish for a holy and peaceful fast and Yom Kippur holiday. Please,

whether you're in a temple, a church, a mosque, or wherever you might be in your worshiping, please do it responsibly and carefully. God bless. Thank you.

END OF CALL

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