

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro Announce Partnership to Strengthen Labor Law Enforcement, Protect Workers' Rights

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States Intend to Form Interstate Task Force to Protect Workers from Wage Theft and Misclassification

PHILADELPHIA – New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro today visited the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District Council 21 training facility in Philadelphia to tour the innovative center and announce their intention ([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/72fqdj/bufvrclb/bqwde3__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!Jg9t3mzRe474WM3xh5AIIKMFLVMRjW_Yrmi2g56y1LdPhyk6M9foB7Jkm-iGoCzGBsWZzWI9NdP80MMjyke0w\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/72fqdj/bufvrclb/bqwde3__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!Jg9t3mzRe474WM3xh5AIIKMFLVMRjW_Yrmi2g56y1LdPhyk6M9foB7Jkm-iGoCzGBsWZzWI9NdP80MMjyke0w$)) to form an interstate task force to address wage theft and worker misclassification in the two states. The interstate task force will work to better foster the collaborative enforcement of each state's labor laws, which include robust worker protections, while enabling healthy business competition between good actors.

New Jersey and Pennsylvania entered a regional Memorandum of Understanding agreement in 2019 to facilitate data sharing, joint investigations, and cooperative referrals. Today's commitment to a continued partnership between the two states bolsters those efforts and demonstrates Governor Shapiro's and Governor Murphy's ongoing focus on worker protections.

"I am thrilled to join Governor Shapiro today to reaffirm our commitment to strengthen labor law enforcement and to announce this new partnership between our states," **said Governor Murphy**. "Every day hard-working New Jerseyans and Pennsylvanians deserve to live without fear that their employers are taking advantage of their rights. With the formation of an interstate task force, our message will be clear - workers' rights are to be respected, defended, and upheld."

"We need to give students like those here at FTI the opportunity to chart their own course in life. That's why my budget includes comprehensive investments in career and technical education and apprenticeships," **said Governor Josh Shapiro**. "But our work can't stop at increasing opportunity – we also need to protect workers' rights once they're on the job. I'm proud to join Governor Murphy to announce that Pennsylvania and New Jersey will strengthen our partnership to stop wage theft and worker misclassification. Pennsylvanians and New Jerseyans work hard, and we will not let them be cheated out of the benefits they've earned."

Earlier in the day, the Governors directed Rob Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Nancy Walker, Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I), to ensure a continued partnership between the states, highlight specific opportunities the departments should pursue, and request the identification of key individuals within each agency to serve on the interstate Task Force.

"Cooperative efforts with our partners in Pennsylvania are crucial to bringing fairness to workers and businesses in our region," **said New Jersey Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. "This teamwork among states ensures consistent enforcement, and dissuades bad actors from exploiting workers on both sides of the Delaware River."

"Worker misclassification is not a phenomenon that exists only in the construction industry or in large metropolitan areas. Law-abiding contractors are losing out on bids across the Commonwealth, and workers in virtually every sector are losing out on rights and protections they've earned as an employee. Workers represented by unions are protected from misclassification, but too many workers are vulnerable to the exploitative actions of bad actors," **L&I Acting Secretary Nancy Walker said**. "I look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in New Jersey to hold accountable those employers who think they can get away with cheating the system."

In response to growing misclassification problems in New Jersey, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 25 on May 3, 2018, establishing an interagency Misclassification Task Force to "promote fairness, fight against discrimination, and work to end unfair labor practices... that create an unfair advantage over companies that play by the rules and hurt our working families." New Jersey has since been considered the "gold standard" for addressing worker misclassification. Similarly, the Pennsylvania Joint Task Force on Misclassification of Employees, created by Act 85 of 2020, made 15 recommendations to improve data sharing, strengthen compliance laws, and increase interagency collaboration, all of which are furthered by today's action.

Together, with this newly intended interstate task force, New Jersey and Pennsylvania intend to become a national model on regional collaboration and will demonstrate the benefits of interstate cooperation.

While this is currently a partnership between New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the Governors hope surrounding states will join them in their efforts to strengthen enforcement actions against labor violations.

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000

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