

Governor Phil Murphy

TRANSCRIPT: August 14th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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Holding a COVID-19 briefing. WATCH:



Governor Phil Murphy: Good afternoon and Happy Friday, everybody. To those in our South Asian communities, a Happy Pakistan Independence Day today, and a Happy India Independence Day tomorrow.

With me today is the woman to my right who needs no introduction, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Judy Persichilli. To her right, another familiar face, the State's Epidemiologist Dr. Christina Tan, great to have you both here. To my far left, another guy who needs no introduction, the Superintendent of the State Police, Colonel Patrick Callahan. We have Jared Maples, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, and with us today we've got a couple of very special guests. To my left, we welcome back our extraordinary Secretary of State Tahesha Way, and with us in the audience is Interim Secretary of Higher Education, Diana Gonzalez. Great to have you both here.

So, today we are announcing that the November 3rd general election will be held overwhelmingly through vote by mail. I will be signing an Executive Order later today to implement this decision. Additionally, our new online voter registration system will be up and running effective September 4th, giving new voters an added ability to ensure they get registered. All of us recognize the importance of this year's election; ensuring that every voter has the ability to securely cast their ballot while protecting public health is our paramount concern. The recent primary election gave us the opportunity to see what worked and where we could make improvements to this kind of election.

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Here in New Jersey, we saw increased participation, the second-highest state primary turnout in history, and that was behind a primary for the Presidential election in 2008, which was still very competitive by the time it rolled into New Jersey. Results here and across our nation showed that making it easier to vote does not favor any one political party, but it does favor democracy. No voter should fear for the sanctity of their ballot. Every voter should have cast their vote knowing that safeguards and procedures are in place to make sure their voice is heard.

Expanding access to the ballot box is something we have worked to do throughout our administration, ensuring not only that everyone gets a ballot, but that they have secure ways of returning that ballot. Those are central to our belief that our democracy is stronger when everyone has the opportunity to participate in it. This mattered before the pandemic and it has even greater urgency now. That is why our plan is built around a simple principle: making sure voting is safe for you and secure for democracy. It means every eligible voter should be able to vote, every vote should be safe, every vote should be secure, and every vote should count. That shouldn't be controversial.

All active registered New Jersey voters will automatically receive a prepaid return postage vote by mail ballot from their county clerks, and all ballots will be mailed by Monday, October 5th. And as with the primary election, there will be no sample ballots. The mailing you received from your county clerk will be the official ballot upon which you will cast your vote.

This is more than a vote by mail election process and I want to make that point clearly. Voters will have more safe options to make sure their voice is heard and their vote counted. In addition to mailing in his or her ballot, every voter will also have the option to either return their ballot through a secure dropbox, and we are expanding the number of those dropboxes, or to hand it directly to a poll worker at a polling place on election day. We are providing these additional means not only to make it even easier for voters to return their ballots, but because the ongoing issues at the US Postal Service requires us to provide them.

The Postal Service and its necessary funding is being turned into a political football by those who simply don't believe in expanding ballot access. We will not let these political issues disenfranchise voters or suppress anyone's ability or right to vote. We will not stand for it and we are doing all that we can to ensure these issues don't stand in the way of empowering citizens.

All ballots being returned through the US Postal Service must carry a postmark by November 3rd, which is Election Day, and be received by the county clerk no later than 8:00 p.m. one week later on Tuesday, November 10th. Ballots which lack postmarks due to postal error received by 8:00 p.m. Thursday, November 5th, so 48 hours later – again, that's 48 hours after the in-person polls have closed – they will be considered valid. And yes, there will be in-person polls open. Each municipality will be required to open at least one in-person polling site, and all counties must ensure that at least 50% of their total polling places are open. Any voter who chooses to cast their vote in person will do so on a provisional ballot, and all individuals with disabilities will have access to an ADA conforming voting machine.

We will work closely with counties and supply the resources needed to ensure that they can open the required number of polling sites and that all ballots are counted accurately and on time. Additionally, on Election Day itself, all public schools will close to in-person instruction to facilitate use of the building as an in-person polling place. As part of this election, Secretary Way and her team will engage voters in a comprehensive education program to mitigate confusion and concerns, and to ensure that every voter understands the role that they play in our democracy.

Voting is one of our most sacred rights and civic responsibilities. The health and strength of our democracy and of our small d democratic values is something we are committed to ensuring. Unlike some other states, we will not look for ways to restrict the rights of voters to have their voices heard or to otherwise block access to the ballot. We are doing everything we can to ensure that every voter is heard.

As much as we enjoy the time-honored traditions of joining our neighbors in a line to cast our ballots on Election Day, and that includes yours truly, and as much as we are energized by seeking packed polling places, we must recognize that this is not a regular election year. We've said that the school year is not going to be normal and this is not a normal election year for many of the same reasons. We could say that in more ways than one, but it certainly matters in terms of how we go about ensuring a free and open election in the

face of this ongoing pandemic. I will ask to Tahesha in a few moments to speak more about this and again, I thank her for her leadership and for being with us today. But I am confident that on November 3rd New Jersey will show our nation that our democracy is stronger than ever before.

Before we get, Judy, to the overnight numbers, we do have a couple of other announcements. First, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, represented today by Diane and her team, will start awarding the first \$150 million in direct support to our colleges and universities to help offset the costs they have incurred since this emergency began, and expect to incur, by the way, through the end of this December, and that includes things like purchasing cleaning and disinfecting supplies, modifying campus facilities, as well as costs related to transitioning to online learning. This support is coming through our share of the Federal CARES Act, corona relief funds or the CRF funds, and higher education officials will have access to an application process to document how they would use this support.

As you recall, on Wednesday I signed an Executive Order formally allowing our higher education community to return to in-person instruction while maintaining access to remote learning. I had a very productive conversation with our college and university presidents yesterday, from both the public and private sectors, by the way, Zakiya Smith Ellis is with us, our Head of Policy, former Secretary of Higher Education. She was on with me yesterday, I thought it was a very productive discussion, and it was a discussion largely relating to the many challenges that those presidents are facing as they confront the questions of how best to serve their campus communities. And again, I want to thank Diana for organizing that call.

We are committed to working in partnership with our institutions of higher education to ensure they can meet their various needs, whether it be ensuring access to programs or better securing the health and wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff. Our colleges and universities are among the very best in the world, never mind the nation. They are a core strength of New Jersey and will play a vital role in our long term recovery and economic growth, and I am committed to seeing them stay strong. Again, I thank the staff at the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, Diana and her team, as well as Zakiya, the former Secretary, for all of their work in bringing this funding mechanism forward.

Switching gears, last Friday, Judy, we unveiled the new contact tracing dashboard through our covid19.nj.gov information hub, and today the dashboard, as we predicted every Friday, it gets its first weekly update. Over the past week, I am proud to note that we added 185 new contact tracers to our public health workforce, giving us an updated total of 1,529 tracers on the ground right now to help us fight the spread of this virus. All but five counties, by the way, have now crossed our first benchmark of having at least 15 contact tracers for every 100,000 residents, and statewide there are more than 17 contact tracers per 100,000 residents. As I noted last week, our eventual goal is to have 30 contact tracers in place for every 100,000 residents. And it remains, by the way, Judy, an eye chart so this is one that's best seen online as opposed to in our slides.

Of the new cases reported into the CommCare platform last week, more than half were followed up within the first 24 hours, a 10-point improvement from the prior week, and that's good. This means that as we add to the ranks of our community contact tracing core, we're increasing our ability to attack this pandemic head on. However, we continue to see a significant number of New Jerseyans refusing to cooperate with our contact tracers. Nearly 20% of the contacts aren't answering the call, and nearly 50% of those who do answer the phone refuse to provide information to our contact tracers.

I've got to reiterate what we've said, Judy, several times. We've got to keep hitting on this point. It is incredibly important for everyone to take this seriously and to work with our contact tracers. Our contact tracers are not out on a witch hunt for any illegal activity like underage drinking, by the way, none of which we condone. Their sole task, however, is to stop the spread of this virus and to save lives, period. Please answer the call and work with and be honest with the contact tracer who calls you. I know Judy will have more on the important of everyone being part of our fight against COVID-19 in a few minutes, but we cannot stress that enough.

With that, let's turn to our overnight numbers. Today, we are reporting an additional 585 positive test results pushing our statewide total since March 4th to 187,164. By the way, our numbers generally look very good, and putting aside all the challenges we've had with our labs, with all due respect to those who think we can just flip a light switch and get back to everything as normal, we have had 3,281 positive tests come back in the past seven days in the state of New Jersey. Again, most of the numbers are good, but there's no denying

these are big numbers of positives. The daily positivity rate, a good number, is 1.63%. There's almost no state in the nation that can match that. The statewide rate of transmission remains under one, it's 0.92. That's another good data point. We want to drive that lower, but that is under one.

In our hospitals, as of last night's reporting, there were 278 known COVID-positive patients being treated with an additional 236 persons under investigation, awaiting test results, the total is 514. Of these, 91 were in the intensive care unit and 40 were requiring a ventilator.

Today, with the heaviest of hearts, we report another 10 losses of life confirmed due to COVID-19 complication. This brings our statewide total of confirmed COVID-19 related fatalities to 14,064 with an additional 1,839 probable deaths. Judy, of the 10 newly confirmed deaths, as I do the math, one is from August 12th, four are from August 11th, and the remainder span from July 21st to August 8th. And again, at the risk of mixing apples and oranges, but we want to make sure folks have the absolute, up-to-date spot reality on fatalities, there were four deaths reported in our hospitals yesterday, which again, are not confirmed so they're not yet included in these totals that you're seeing on the slide from COVID-19 complications.

As we do every day, let's recall a few more of the blessed New Jerseyans who we have lost. I want to begin in Wayne today, which was the home of Mary Luisi. She moved to Wayne 20 years ago after being raised in Paterson, and also making her home there with her beloved late husband, Will. Mary was a seamstress in Paterson, working for the Manhattan Shirt Company at 237 River Street, where she also produced some of the first preproduction apparel pieces for the company's womenwear division, which was called Lady Manhattan. Sewing wasn't just her vocation, it was also a hobby she enjoyed throughout her life.

Away from the sewing machine, Mary was a collector of dolls, particularly and quite fittingly, angels, and equally enjoyed reading and watching soap operas. She was also a devout parishioner of Wayne's Our Lady of the Valley Roman Catholic Church. Most of all, Mary took joy in her family, especially taking on her siblings – Judy, pay attention to this – in a competitive game of Uno. Mary is now reunited with her beloved Will, who passed away in 1979. She leaves her son William and daughter Yolanda, and I had the great honor of speaking with Yolanda on Wednesday, and their spouses, along with her five grandchildren Dana, Christopher, Jennifer, William and Salvador, and five great-grandchildren, Giovanna, Christiano, Ava, Andrew and Alex. She's also survived by her sisters Edith and Angel. May God bless you, Mary, and watch over you and your family.

Next we remember Beatrice, known by Bea, Fink, a longtime resident of Springfield and most recently of Fanwood. Bea was 93 years old. She was born in Newark and she was a graduate, as is Sheila Oliver, our rocking Lieutenant Governor, Weequahic High School, and she married her high school sweetheart, Irwin. Bea had a 50-year bookkeeping career starting in her father's dry cleaning business, Coppermin and Sons, before moving on to respectively, Bayer and Carnac Corporation. Bea was a strong and affectionate woman, but she had two weaknesses in particular. Number one, Hoboken's Frank Sinatra, and number two, a good pastrami sandwich. She would also drop whatever she was doing for a game of Mahjong.

She and Irwin were longtime members of Temple Beth Ahm in Springfield, and Bea volunteered for Meals on Wheels. Bea lost Irwin 13 years ago, and was also pre deceased by her blessed daughter Ellen. Today she leaves behind her daughters Ronnie and Marci, and I had the great honor of speaking with Marci on Wednesday, and Marci's husband Joey. She also leaves her four grandchildren, Michael, Barry, Jacob, and Nicole and her great-grandson Evan, who was a special light in her eyes. She is also survived by two sisters-in-laws and many nieces and nephews. May Bea's memory be a blessing for her family and her community.

And finally today, we honor the life of Patrick DeGennaro. He lived in Hasbrouck Heights and was just 63 years old. Patrick was a registered nurse at Hackensack University Medical Center for the past 28 years. Before coming to New Jersey, Patrick lived in Brooklyn, where he was born, raised and began his career in healthcare as a volunteer EMT for Bravo Volunteer Ambulance Service. Notably, Patrick was one of the first two men to graduate from St. Vincent's School of Nursing in Brooklyn.

His career path in nursing meant that he would cross paths at Brooklyn's Victory Memorial Hospital with an ICU nurse named Connie. They were married for 27 years until her untimely passing eight years ago. And while former patients would often stop Patrick to thank him for caring for them, he would forever say Connie was the smartest nurse he ever met. At University Medical Center, Patrick was nothing short of a leader and was recognized by HUMC as its most valuable team member of the year in the year 2001.

Patrick was a man of strong Catholic faith and was a member of both the Monsignor Fitzpatrick Knights of Columbus Council 7041 in Hasbrouck Heights, and the Bishop O'Connor Fourth Degree Assembly in Hackensack. And Pat, you may wonder how did Patrick DeGennaro come by the Monsignor Fitzpatrick or the Bishop O'Connor, his daughter pointed out to me with great conviction that he was Irish on his mother's side.

Patrick leaves behind that daughter, Caitlin, standing right behind him in that picture, as well as his sister Diana, sitting to his right and along with many nieces and nephews, and I had the great honor of speaking with Caitlin on Wednesday. In every respect, Patrick died a hero, a frontline healthcare hero selflessly helping to fight the pandemic that would ultimately take his life. We thank him for his commitment and dedication to the people in his care, and may God bless and watch over him.

Three more from among the 14,000 we have lost since March. May their stories, may their lives that they lived in the families they left behind inspire us to redouble our efforts, despite the fatigue and despite all else to defeat this virus. We cannot stop with our social distancing. We cannot stop wearing our face coverings. We cannot be going to house parties or standing among maskless crowds outside a bar. We have to stick with the things we've been doing, things that are saving lives, and by the way, that includes our own. Heading into another summer weekend, please folks, let's not forget this. You've been extraordinary. Your responsibility has been overwhelming. Keep it up. Don't let your guard down.

Before I wrap, it's quite appropriate that Tahesha is here. Tahesha, you've got a plateful here between elections and the census, along with everything else you've got. God bless you. I want to give a quick update, as we do every week, on our progress in responding to the 2020 census. As of today, 65.4% of New Jersey households have responded to the census and gotten themselves properly counted. Hats off to you. In Hunterdon County, the response rate is now over 75% and in seven others, Bergen, Burlington, Gloucester, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset and Warren, response rates now top 70%, and a few others are nearing that threshold as well. So to everyone who has been counted, thank you. Your responses are critical to ensuring we are properly represented in Washington and that New Jersey gets back every single penny of federal support we not only need, but that we deserve.

This week, census takers began their work of knocking on the doors of those households that have not yet responded. And this time, they're doing it with more urgency as the deadline for the census has been moved forward to September 30th. But even as time become short, our get out the count effort to get everyone counted has begun. Across the state, we are digging deep within communities to make sure everyone knows about the census and that their responses are safe and secure, and cannot be used against them in any way.

So I urge you, please keep helping. It's not enough to be counted yourself. Make sure your friends and family know the importance of the census. Make sure they go to 2020census.gov and they're counted. What we do in the next 47 days determines literally our fate for the next 10 years. Our future depends on our having an accurate count. I thought, Tahesha, we had a great Zoom call yesterday. You and I were on it, the First Lady. We had Yvonne Lopez, our great Assemblywoman who is from Perth Amboy and cares so deeply about this, I want to give her a shout out. We had representatives from among other communities the South Asian, the Chinese, the Latino, Make the Road was present, our Muslim brothers and sisters were present. It was a really good call, basically getting 200 or 300 faith leaders, community leaders, other leaders out there fired up to go out there and sprint through the finish line.

And finally for this week, let's take a look at another of the New Jersey based small businesses that has partnered with the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to remain strong and viable in the face of this unprecedented pandemic. This is Vorhees-based MAPay, the brainchild of that guy, seasoned technology entrepreneur Michael Dersham. I asked him, do people really call you Dersh? And he said if you're inside the circle of trust, yes, he granted me that permission, only if, he said, he could call me Murph, so we have that deal. Under Dersham's vision and leadership, MAPay was already establishing itself as a leading healthcare payment processing firm and specializing in creating and deploying healthcare payment solutions that reduce transaction costs, and at the same time, improve transparency and payment completion rates.

And with the pandemic changing the way we see our healthcare practitioners, MAPay created its COVID-19 Digital Entry Assessment Form, a digital assessment tool that helps patients, employees and visitors get prescreened before they set foot inside a building. The tool is helping to keep healthcare offices safe, providing text responses to patients when it's their turn to see their practitioner. Throughout the pandemic,

MAPay has additionally established itself as a leader in telehealth payment processing, bringing together our healthcare stakeholders and prudent contactless commerce. MAPay qualified for the NJ EDA's Entrepreneurial Support Program, which guaranteed 80% of the qualified loans made to the company by its existing equity holders. And with this funding, MAPay has retained staff and built out additional technologies relevant to its work fighting the pandemic. So to you, Dersh, and your team, thank you for making New Jersey your home and for all you are doing to help us flatten the curve. And that goes, by the way, for everybody across New Jersey. Let's not give the coronavirus or COVID-19 another inch.

Finally, completely unrelatedly, I want to end by adding my voice to those of Holocaust survivors, each and every one of those survivors and their families, but especially my dear friend Roman Kent and his family, calling on Facebook to remove Holocaust deniers from its platforms. Hate and misinformation have no place in civil society and should have no home on Facebook or anywhere else. The numbers of those who witnessed the Holocaust, and by the grace of God survived, are dwindling. We must heed their stories and experiences, or we risk them being repeated. Never again. Facebook, step up and do the right thing.

With that said, Please help me welcome a leader in so many respects, the Secretary of State for the Great State of New Jersey, the one only Tahesha Way.

Secretary of State Tahesha Way: Thank you, Governor, especially for your leadership. I am proud to work with you, Commissioner Persichilli and of course, Colonel Callahan every day, especially throughout this public health crisis. I want to first begin by recognizing our county and local election officials, the county and municipal clerks, county boards of elections, county superintendents and their respective staffs. They are truly the frontlines of our democracy. Their incredible work ethic, the sheer time and energy they have put into ensuring their fellow citizens can and will vote despite a pandemic deserves our sincere thanks.

Now, I won't sugarcoat it. This primary was not easy. We had just six weeks to get everything in place for the July 7th election, an election that didn't look like any other New Jersey race before. When the five states that run their elections exclusively using vote by mail transitioned to this kind of election system, they did so over years, but of course we did not have that kind of time. Still, Democratic and Republican voters got their party's vote by mail ballots. Unaffiliated voters received a vote by mail application. My Department of State funded five secure ballot dropboxes per county to allow for ballot return by means other than the United States Postal Service.

On a regular Election Day, New Jersey has about 3,400 polling locations open. In the last decade, we've seen more and more people choose to vote by mail, and more than 600,000 New Jersey voters vote that way in every election. But, out of a population of more than 6 million voters, most people before the pandemic were voting in person on Election Day. For this primary, we had about 1,600 polling locations open, at least one in each town, an estimated 1.5 million voters cast their ballots. In person voting was limited to those voters needing accessible voting devices and voters casting a provisional ballot. There were a few hiccups. Still, we view the July primary a success because we kept voting safe, secure and accessible for New Jersey voters.

Polling locations didn't experience any long lines. We had a record turnout. So what do we know and need to know for November? As our Governor has said, all active voters will receive a vote by mail ballot. We'll have more secure ballot dropboxes to return your ballots safely without using the mail. We'll be providing PPE to election workers and a significant number of polling locations will be available on Election Day for voters with disabilities needing to use the accessible voting devices and for those, again, who need to vote provisionally. And just as with the primary, we have procedures in place to assist voters if their vote by mail ballot return envelope has a signature missing or does not match what we have on file.

Following the primary, 6,851 voters were able to verify their ballots after signature issues. We are also working closely with every level of government, with our colleagues in law enforcement and emergency response, with voting rights organizations, community advocates, to ensure that November's elections are free, fair and safe. At the same time, we're also counting on voters. We need you to be prepared and be actively engaged during this election cycle. That means using the "Am I Registered?" function on our website, elections.nj.gov, to check and make sure your registration is up to date and active. If it isn't, and you check now, you have plenty of time to update it and make sure it is current.

Now expect everything to take time, but stay on top of where your ballot is. Ballots will be mailed out to voters beginning the first week of October. You should be checking your mailbox and if it is the second week in October and it hasn't arrived, do something. If you choose to return your ballot by mail, our website has a ballot tracker feature and every voter can sign up to track their ballot and make sure you know how it gets back to your board of elections.

Voters might need to, of course, spend a little extra time in completing their vote by mail ballots, because we know that this may be new to some voters, so please read the instructions carefully before you fill out the ballot. Remember these four steps, vote, sign, seal, return. We'll be working to communicate these steps to voters and get them the information they need to know. We're coordinating with the counties on a comprehensive education campaign to make sure every voter in New Jersey knows how to participate in this election.

Voters need to remember that your election officials, whether it is me as your Secretary of State, your county clerks, your board of elections, your superintendents of elections are your trusted sources of information. Use our website, call our Voter Protection hotline at 1-877-NJVOTER. Reach out to your local officials if you think you should report something, or you haven't received your ballot or you don't know where your polling location is. That is what we're here for. See something, say something, do something. But also, if you need help understanding any aspect of your ballot or participating in our election, again, we underscore the requests to ask.

And we need to ask more of you to. We need young, healthy individuals to step up and serve as poll workers. Even with a mostly vote by mail election, we still have in-person polling locations. We are working to reach out to colleges and organizations like the State Bar Association to recruit younger poll workers who we need to take the place of many of our regular poll workers, who tend to be older and more at risk for COVID-19. You can go to pollworker.nj.gov for more information.

I'd also like to remind folks that formerly incarcerated people who are on parole or probation as of March 17th of this year, thanks to the Governor and the state Legislature are allowed to register and vote. Now if this applies to someone you know, make sure they are aware that they are eligible to participate in our elections. In the first week of September, we will also launch online voter registration allowing any eligible New Jersey citizen to register without having to print or mail anything.

I want to further remind everyone of one key date. The voter registration deadline to participate in this November 3rd election is October 13th. I know all of this may be new for people, but I am confident that New Jersey voters, that all of us can do this. If you have any further questions, my office at the Department of State and the Division of Elections, as well as the county election officials are here to help and answer your questions. Thank you, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Tahesha, thank you for your leadership on this, on the census, on tourism, and a lot of stuff that really matters in our state. I want to underscore three quick things. Dan Bryan, not today, but let's put pollworker.nj.gov as a website up occasionally over the next couple of weeks, because your point, Tahesha, is a very fair one. We don't want the unintended consequence of an older poll worker or someone who's got some co-morbidities, Judy, showing up, feeling obligated if we can somehow dig deeper into a younger, healthy group.

Secondly, we gave county clerks approximately, I believe, 30 days' notice on the in-person requirements for the primary, so that was both 50% capacity by county and at least one location in each municipality. County clerks, in fairness, we couldn't do it any earlier because we're in the midst of the pandemic and this had never been done before. They rightfully and part of your post mortem I know was they said listen, we'd like a longer runway. So we're doing that. This is an 81 day, if my math is right, runway to get those physical places in shape.

And then on the mail in side, we're going to continue to be very tough and very firm with the US Postal Service to make sure that we can trust that system. Let's not – the politicization of the Postal Service is beyond repugnant. Let's remember, let's not play with fire here. The Postal Service, let me just give one example, the postal service, we rely on the Postal Service for seniors to receive their medicines. So with all due respect to trying to politicize ballots, we rely as a country on the Postal Service for a whole range of things. But, just to add to your faith that your vote will count, you've also heard both me say and Tahesha say more articulately

and eloquently, the fact that you've got two other options for your mail-in ballot. We're going to have secure, at least 10 secure locations per county where you can physically, which are going to be monitored security cameras, etc. take your ballot and put it in that box and see it yourself knowing that's secure; or secondly, you could literally show up on Election Day with your mail-in ballot in hand and hand it to the poll worker.

So not only on the mail-in side are we going to continue to be really tough on the Postal Service and hope that we get that same sort of support nationally, but we've given you two explicit ways to get your mail-in ballot to be sure that you can see it with your own eyes that it's going to be counted. So for all of the above Tahesha, thank you for your extraordinary leadership and look forward to working with you. 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. As the Governor covered, we are making progress in building our army of contact tracers in our state. However, we still have too many residents not providing key information to reach their contacts and control the spread of COVID-19. That means that many individuals, the contacts, are not aware that they've been exposed to COVID-19. These individuals could be your family, your friends and your coworkers who unknowingly are contributing to the spread of the virus. This puts residents at risk, especially those who are most vulnerable, older adults and those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and lung disease.

To help residents understand the importance of contact tracing and testing, last week we launched our public awareness campaign, For Each Other, For Us All. This campaign is a multichannel communications effort reaching vulnerable and high-risk audiences across the state with a heightened focus on communities of color, which have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Advertising is targeted to reach populations most at risk. Ads will also run in multicultural communities, such as the cities of Newark, Paterson, Elizabeth, Camden, Atlantic City and Trenton. As the campaign progresses, we hope the message for residents, For Each Other, For Us All, Answer the Call, will further resonate and we will see an increase in residents sharing their contacts with tracers so we can contain the virus.

Although the campaign has been running for a short time, we are already seeing positive results. More than 770,000 individuals have shared or liked the campaign ads on Facebook. We have seen a high engagement with the senior population via this social media channel. Video advertising on Univision has engaged residents with nearly all of them watching the majority of the video. The COVID-19 information hub has seen nearly 35,000 page views since the launch, and 95% of the users visited the site for the first time. After going to the test and trace page, most users have been clicking on the testing information page. More than 100 TV ads and nearly 600 radio ads have run so far. Billboards in New Jersey Transit advertising are up in key urban centers in Newark, Elizabeth, Camden, Patterson, Atlantic City and Trenton. We will continue to expand the reach of our campaign in the weeks to come.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 514 hospitalizations of COVID-19 positive patients and persons under investigation. There are 91 individuals in critical care, of which 43% of those patients are on ventilators. Over the past two days, however, we have seen an increase in our new cases. Those cases are still under investigation, so we continue to encourage individuals to mask up, socially distance and avoid in-house parties and mass gatherings.

There are no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. That total remains at 55. The children affected have either tested positive for COVID-19 or have had antibody tests that were positive to COVID-19. The ages range from 1 to 18, and none of those children are currently hospitalized. The breakdown by race and ethnicity is White 14%, Black 35%, disproportionately Hispanic at 41%, Asian 6% and other 4%.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths. In terms of deaths the breakdown by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 54.1%, Black 18.4%, Hispanic 20.2%, Asian 5.5% and other 1.8%. As reported, of the 10 deaths that we are reporting today, two occurred in July and eight occurred in August. At the state veterans homes the numbers remain the same as they do at the psychiatric hospitals.

The percent positivity as of August 10th in New Jersey is 1.63%. The Northern part of the state is reporting 1.45%, the Central part of the state 1.29%, and the southern part of the state 2.55%. That concludes my report. Stay connected, stay safe and healthy, get tested, mask up, and for each other and for us all, please answer the call. Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Judy, well done as always. Thank you for that and again, as we've said now scores if not hundreds of times, COVID-19 did not create the awful inequities, but it has laid them bare, whether it's the inflammatory syndrome, those who are sick, those who have died, particularly and especially across racial lines. Thank you for everything, as always.

Pat, a couple of things. I know we got a potential -- I don't think they're bearing down on New Jersey. In addition to compliance, we've got a couple of storms in the Atlantic. We'd love to get your take on that. Joe Fiordaliso sent us a note, tragically, that a contractor working on utility work was hit by a tree in Morristown and lost his life. And it's just a point to reiterate, if it took a long time for you to get your electric service back on, and you're upset about that, we don't blame you for that, trust me. But boy, as I always say, and I know Pat, you and Joe join me in this, when we say to these providers and we press them so hard, the words we almost invariably always end the conversation or the text with is soon, meeting get your power back on, and safe. And this was a contractor who apparently lost his life. So keep him and his family in your prayers. Pat, with that, over to you.

State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan: Thank you, Governor. Good afternoon. Over the past two days, there are no Executive Order compliance issues to report. And to your point about the weather, OEM is monitoring two systems currently. One is Tropical Storm Josephine, as well as another system that's forming down by Cape Hatteras, North Carolina that has not been named yet. But if it is named, I've been advised that it'll be Kyle. And if it is named, it'll be the earliest named K storm in the history of naming hurricanes. So just to speak to, Josephine was the earliest named J and as predicted, we think this is going to be a very active hurricane system for the next few months, so our State Emergency Operations Center is monitoring that closely. Thanks, Governor.

Governor Phil Murphy: Pat, thank you for that. We'll start over here, Matt. But before we get into questions, a couple of things I want to hit briefly. We'll be with you virtually tomorrow and Sunday, unless you hear otherwise, Monday we're going to be a little bit later. I think we're going to be at 3:00 on Monday, 3:00 in person here, so forgive us for that and thank you for your patience.

I think I alluded to this on Wednesday, I had at a very good conversation with the CEO of Moderna, which is one of the big vaccine players right now alongside Pfizer, and then the combination of AstraZeneca and Oxford University. This is not the first time we've engaged with them, just to get an update. Separately, I know Judy and George Helmy were on this morning with your teams with the White House on testing with our never ending efforts to reduce the turnaround time, and God willing we'll see some progress out of that. Had a very good, the three of us yesterday, Senate President Steve Sweeney, Speaker Craig Coughlin and I covering a whole range of topics, including preliminary discussions on the budget. They're so preliminary, I don't have much to add, other than please out there, if you're listening, we still need federal cash direct to the states and locals.

And then lastly, Pat, we alluded to this earlier, I think on Monday, and I just want to fire this warning shot again. We will be unsparing and merciless if you're having an indoor house party. That will be enforced to the very best and fullest of our abilities. We will not have any patience with bars or attendees at bars who are gathering in close contact and there's no protocol to stand in line to get in, or once they're in it, especially without face coverings. The degrees of freedom, as they say in soccer, you're working on a yellow card. The next one sends you out of the game and we mean business. So we're going into a hot summer weekend. We want everybody to enjoy it. Just wear your darn face covering, stay away from each other, celebrate outdoors, but do it responsibly, folks. Again, we cannot, you now, as I said, Judy, you mentioned this. Forget why, 585 today, 699 yesterday, 3,281 positive cases in the past seven days That's the math. Again, our numbers in many respects are a heck of a lot better than they used to be, but we are not in the end zone. With that, Mike. Good afternoon. Can you all be fairly crisp today, just because we've got a lot of you here? Nice to see you.

Q&A Session

Mike Catalini, Associated Press: Good afternoon, Governor. Nice to see you, thanks. Can you talk about, how do you square the decision to go to a nearly all-mail election while the Attorney General is pursuing criminal voter fraud charges against four people in Paterson? Did the fact of the criminal investigation give

you any pause about going this route? And how do you allay voters fears? You talked a little bit about it, but how do you allay voters fears that maybe their vote won't count or they'll show up to the poll place and they won't be able to vote the way they traditionally will?

On the Postal Service, have you been talking to anyone at the Postal Service? Have they made any promises or indicated to you that that they're prepared to handle the potential or likely influx in ballots this fall? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thanks, Mike. Listen, I think the Paterson example actually speaks to the other side of this. Law enforcement is all over it. People have been indicted. If you screw around with voting, whether it's vote by mail or another way, you're going to be caught and you'll be held accountable. So I actually think it's a positive data point and not a negative one.

How do we allay voters fears? I think I mentioned this. First of all we will, I think I've got a call with the Postal Service, I believe it's at some point next week. Matt Platkin is with us. He and I had been in regular, from before the primary, well before the primary up until the present, we've been in regular interactions with them and we've been firm and we've been able to find common ground, and we'll continue to be. I think you allay voters fears, first of all, this has got to die down as a national matter. The Postal Service doesn't just do vote by mail. As I mentioned earlier, drugs and pharmaceuticals and medicines for seniors is one of many examples we could all quickly come up with that are vital services that the Postal Service provides, so let's cut the politics out of this. Let's get the national debate into a healthy place. Let's make sure they're properly funded.

But again, as I said a few minutes ago, and Tahesha, again on the back of her great remarks, even notwithstanding all of that you're still concerned, we're going to have a lot of secure ballot boxes, at least 210, i.e. 10 per county, as well as the ability to walk in on Election Day and literally hand your ballot to a poll worker. I'm confident the Postal Service nonsense will be depoliticized. I'm confident they'll know exactly for me personally, and Matt and the team, Tahesha and team, what our needs are and expectations are in New Jersey. But notwithstanding even all of that, we've got two very specific outlets for folks to get their ballots in. Thank you. Dustin, good afternoon.

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: Good afternoon. So far, at least two Freeholder boards have approved all in-person elections. Are they allowed to override your order? Given the President's stated refusal to provide emergency funding to the Postal Service, why not figure out a way to make in-person voting safer instead of vote by mail? And can you clarify how a ballot that is not postmarked but received after the election is considered valid?

Do you have an update on immigrant driver's licenses and whether that's still on schedule to start in January, and if not, how long will the delay be?

Finally, do you approve of and were you given a heads up that New Direction New Jersey was going to send out an email blast deriding President Trump as a reckless knucklehead and that his behavior has been an insult to the progress in New Jersey? Doesn't that undermine the more diplomatic approach that you've taken with the President throughout the pandemic?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm honored to have my approach deemed diplomatic. I didn't understand the first question, Dustin.

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: The very first one?

Governor Phil Murphy: Yeah, the first one.

Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record: Two freeholder boards so far have approved all in-person elections. Are they allowed to override your order, essentially?

Governor Phil Murphy: Okay, sorry about that. The answer is no to the first one. Secondly, on emergency funding, I assume you mean federal for the Postal Service? Yeah, I mean, we need it clearly and I'll incorporate my answer to Mike. It's been politicized to the point of ridiculousness. It's not what the Postal Service is about and it does need the funding.

How is it that a ballot that comes in within 48 hours, when I mentioned there was a postmark question after 8:00 p.m. on November 3rd, I think we're basically acknowledging there could have been some mistake, but Matt, do you want to answer that?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Yeah, for whatever reason, some ballots, and it's not a huge number that get into the postal stream are not postmarked so the question is, what do you do with ballots that are received shortly after the election? There was litigation in New York where the judge said that if it's received within a short period of time, you have to count it as if it was mailed before the election deadline. And the reason for that is within 48 hours, as we said, it's exceedingly unlikely that it would have been placed in the mail after the election deadline. Typically, mail is not stamped and delivered on the same day that it's mailed.

Governor Phil Murphy: On driver's licenses, I don't have an updated answer for you. I would hope we're still on schedule but Dan, will you come back to Dustin and give us that? And listen, New Direction is an independent 501c4. I don't preapprove what they send out. And, by the way, I think we've used the word knucklehead both at one level substantively, don't put yourself or others at risk as a health matter, but also in a lighthearted way and I can't speak for them, but that's the way I view it. It's a combination of both. We'll come back to you, with your blessing, on the driver's licenses. Thank you. Brent, good afternoon.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: The first questions from Nick from the New York Times, the rest are from –

Governor Phil Murphy: Nick who? I haven't heard from him in ages.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: He's a good guy. Does the defunding of the Post Office and the President's remarks about ruining their funding give you concern about the ability to conduct an election by mail? What contingency plans are in place?

Then these are all from me. Do you think the mail-in election now puts you on a collision course with President Trump? And what do you make of Trump continuously citing Paterson as an example of mail fraud? Could you and would you use federal coronavirus stimulus money to pay for the mail-in election? What about working out a deal with FedEx or UPS to guarantee ballots are delivered to New Jersey? Does this mean we may not know election results, especially the Presidential election, for a few days in New Jersey?

And then two quick ones on schools. Will the state list coronavirus cases at schools on the state dashboard? And is the \$150 million announced today just for public colleges? Are Princeton and Monmouth getting a cut? When will the money be dispersed?

Governor Phil Murphy: You sure you don't have anymore?

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: No, I'm good.

Governor Phil Murphy: Just checking. Your Mets are doing better, by the way.

Brent Johnson, Star-Ledger: They are.

Governor Phil Murphy: I think I've answered the first one from Nick, so roll Nick the tape of the question for my answer for Mike and Dustin. It's ridiculous the Post Office is being politicized. It exists for a myriad of incredibly important reasons. I believe with all my heart that it will be funded and cooler heads will prevail.

Does it put us on a collision course? No, because listen, again, we're trying to make all the decisions, especially the ones related to public health, based on the science and the data and the facts, and the data and the facts that we see based on our experience in the July 7th primary lead us with great confidence to the announcement we have today, including meaningful tweaks. So a longer runway to get more in-person capacity, and a couple of very clear outlets for folks to get their vote by mail ballot counted without relying on the Postal Service. In other words, the dropboxes as well as handing it on Election Day.

I think I've addressed the Paterson point. I actually think it's a data point on the other side. It shows that if someone screws around with this, we're going to catch you and we're going to indict you.

FedEx, I don't have a good crisp answer on that. We believe that the Postal Service, in our experience in the July 7th election worked. If we think for any reason as we go through this, would we look and reconsider that? I suppose we would, but we don't make this announcement today, either Tahesha or I, without a very high degree of confidence that the system will work through the US Postal Service.

Would we use coronavirus CARES Act money or CRF money to help with the elections? Yeah, I don't know, have we done that or considered it?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: Sorry, do you mean specifically to fund the Postal Service or do you mean with the election generally?

Governor Phil Murphy: That's definitely above our pay grade.

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: So we did in the July election use, there was a couple of buckets of federal money. There's federal money that was directed towards elections and then there's the Coronavirus Relief Fund, which is a larger pot of money. I'll let the Secretary speak to any specific plans, but we have used federal money in the past and had the funding, and will continue to.

Governor Phil Murphy: On your last question on the \$150 million, again with a big equity, so this has got a big criteria are going to be low-income students, Pell Grant, total number of students, etc. but Diana Gonzalez is here to answer the question.

Interim Secretary of Higher Education Diana Gonzalez: The money will be available to all four-year public institutions, as well as the public admission independents, the four-years, and the community colleges. The allocations will be announced today.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that. What's a good website for folks to go to?

Interim Secretary of Higher Education Diana Gonzalez: Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. Our press release will be there and it's oshe.nj.gov.

Governor Phil Murphy: oshe.nj.gov. Great to have you, Diana. Elise, Good afternoon.

Elise Young, Bloomberg: Good afternoon. Governor Cuomo on Monday is expected to announce policy for limited gym reopenings. Do you anticipate doing the same? Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy: Bless you for your economical questions. We'll never forget that moment. I think our team has a meeting with the Gym Owners Association I think literally beginning right now, at two o'clock, so I've got no news to report but we are trying to find a way to get to both indoor dining and get gyms open. Again, I don't have news to report. I can't tell you when or how. My guess is we're going to need to continue to see good numbers and there will be significant parameters, especially around capacity matters, but bear with us on that. And again, we take their concerns very seriously. My buddy Kevin McHugh from Atlantic Health has been back and forth with both me and with our team. As I said, I think there's a call literally as we speak. Thank you for that. Sir.

Reporter: Governor, county clerks had asked the Governor's Office to consider letting voters choose whether they wanted to vote by mail or in person. Why are you not giving voters that option?

And also, some clerks say the public awareness campaign for the July primary wasn't big enough. What are you doing to get the word out about the format of the general election?

Governor Phil Murphy: Is that it? Thank you for both. The answer is we are. So you're going to get a ballot and you can either put it in the mail, drop it in a secure box, hand it to a poll worker on Election Day, or do none of that, show up and vote in person. So the answer is we are.

And public awareness, I think I referred to this earlier, and Tahesha, you may want to weigh in on this as well. You refer to a public campaign. We had made the decision, I believe these dates are right, 30 days before the primary. And again, we were at the height of the pandemic and we had never done this before. Today, if my math is right, we're 81 days out before the primary. Tahesha, you may want to comment about how you're going to raise public awareness for how this process is going to work.

Secretary of State Tahesha Way: Thank you, Governor. I just want to explain that even in the Primary, our office did have the education campaign, it was called Make Your Mark, so just putting that there. But in addition to what we're doing moving forward, we intend, as I had stated in my remarks, to have a comprehensive education campaign which should be launching around the Labor Day time. And of course,

what we want to do is similar to, and I thank you for mentioning the census, Governor, replicate that model of a campaign in which we are coordinating all of the requisite election changes and deadlines, and understanding voter engagement and information so that our voters will push that out on the local level.

And of course, we're looking to do this in massive outlets such as social media, such as in print, because we get it. We understand this is a change in how we are voting and we want to make certain that every vote counts. So we are hopeful that everyone is going to be engaged and on the lookout for this comprehensive educational campaign.

Governor Phil Murphy: And by the way, the clerks don't have it easy here, in fairness to them, right? None of us, Tahesha and her team do not have it easy. We're in uncharted territory. And again, we're balancing two very simple realities, the sacred right to vote which is at the core of our democracy, and public health and personal health, and getting that right is the name of the game. Thank you for that. Sir, do you have any in the back? You're good. Charlie, good afternoon.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Yes, Governor and I wish you a happy birthday in advance.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: I hope you get to spend it with some people you love. Today is my birthday and –

Governor Phil Murphy: Charlie, you and I can go out and raise some hell together, so.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: I do have a question for your Commissioner of Health. The new zip code dashboard was supposed to launch this week. Why hasn't that launched yet?

For Secretary Way, the online voter registration system, who is developing that? Is it the same folks who did the SVRS? Why wasn't this online voter registration system ready in time for the statutory deadline last month?

For you, Governor, Rutgers' budgets been devastated and lots of layoffs of folks, but the football coaches got a \$4 million contract. You supported him being brought on. What should happen to him? Should he be furloughed, laid off, or take a pay cut?

Any comment on the guilty plea of former Middlesex Borough Mayor Ron DiMura?

And finally, three weeks ago, the last time we spoke, I was following up on some unanswered questions about the Lincoln Annex School and the last words you had for me were, I promise you we will follow up I'm not sure what the follow up will be, but we'll follow up with you. I did not get any follow up. And so for my birthday if you could please –

Governor Phil Murphy: Is it your birthday too?

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Today is my birthday, yes.

Governor Phil Murphy: Is it really? Happy Birthday, man.

Charlie Kratovil, New Brunswick Today: Thank you, and so would you please give a substantive answer on the Lincoln Annex matter?

Governor Phil Murphy: I'll repeat two things I've said before other than Happy Birthday. Judy's a graduate. Secondly, it's being replaced with a new school and there's a big cancer center, all of which is good for New Brunswick. But in terms of the lack of follow up, blame Dan Bryan. I asked Dan to follow up and he didn't follow up. Dan, could you please go to Charlie after this and make an honest man out of me? Thank you.

Listen, Rutgers, I've said this from the moment there was a discussion around the coach being hired and it's a huge deal, in my humble opinion, for Rutgers and for New Jersey that he's here. It's not one or the other. You know, this is a big, one of America's biggest public universities and biggest research universities and we should be able to find a way to balance both its endeavors as a big research university and teaching university, as well as a university that has extracurricular sports and other activities and competes in the Big 10 and Coach Schiano, we're thrilled to have him here.

I have no comment on the mayor's situation, not surprisingly. I've read about it in the papers, but I've got no specifics.

Judy, the zip code dashboard feature and Tahesha, the online voting registration. Do you want to jump in?

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: There's some technical glitches but the zip code dashboard is being worked on as we speak, so I hope by the end of the day we can finalize that.

Governor Phil Murphy: Maybe we'll give an update on Monday when we're here.

Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli: Yeah, sure. Happy Birthday.

Governor Phil Murphy: And Happy birthday. Tahesha.

Secretary of State Tahesha Way: Thank you, Governor. Yes, it's the same vendor for OVR. I want to also say we made the request to extend as a result of the COVID situation, and we want to ensure that we get it right and we want to ensure there's integrity and security. So of course, we're working with Director Maples' team to roll this out in an efficient and a secure manner. Thanks for the question.

Governor Phil Murphy: I mean, Jared had to step out but the security around this, not just the voter registration but the entire process is something. I'm glad you raised it. I'd be remiss if we didn't, we've got to make sure that every vote counts and that it is as secure as humanly possible. So thank you for that and Happy Birthday. Nikita, good afternoon.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: Good afternoon. You'll be happy to hear it is not my birthday.

Governor Phil Murphy: Charlie, you can still invite him if you like.

Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe: I do have a few questions, though. Will there be any early counting of mail-in ballots? Is early voting still on the table for November? Do you think there's any way to get that done in time? Are cure letters going to be used?

And then for the Secretary, how much confidence do you have in Know Inc.'s ability to fix technical problems with the SVRS before ballots are mailed out in October? And I think that's it.

Governor Phil Murphy: I'm going to comment on early voting and ask Matt Platkin to answer either cure letters or early counting. We actually had an early voting conversation among our team this morning. I continue to be a huge proponent, and I think the Senate President, I don't want to put words in his mouth, Senate President and the Speaker are as well. But I've been told that it's somehow gotten gummed up a little bit. I don't have any insight as to why. I don't know, I can't sit here and say on August 14th that I know whether or not it could still be ungummed in time. Boy, I want it, but I can't give you a crisp answer as to the status of the legislative process. And if we get one, Dan, we'll get back to Nikita. Matt, could you hit early counting and the cure letter question?

Chief Counsel Matt Platkin: The Executive Order does not allow for early counting and the cure process is discussed in the order we're still working out, but obviously we implemented one for July, it largely worked and we're working to refine that, working with advocates and the Legislature.

Governor Phil Murphy: Thank you for that, and Tahesha, you had one that went your way, the confidence.

Secretary of State Tahesha Way: Thank you, Governor and thank you, Nikita for asking the question because I think that throughout the primary cycle, there was a bit of, and I say this respectfully, misinformation on how various issues were reported in terms of the SVRS system. Now, the distinction between the primary and of course the general, those issues really would not even affect the November 3rd elections. We have, on a regular basis, we've partnered now with our OIT to address any and all issues that would potentially occur. I am confident in our system for the November general.

Governor Phil Murphy: I would just add to that, we would not be making this announcement and again, I give Tahesha and her Board of Elections team and the whole crowd at the Secretary of State's team, we have really kicked the tires on this. Does it mean that we've got all the answers? No, but we feel really good about given the moment in time we find ourselves, getting the balance right. We think this does it between the sacred right to vote and public health and personal health on the other hand.

I'm going to, with that, cover up here. Again, we will be with you virtually tomorrow and Sunday unless you hear otherwise. Monday we'll be at 3:00 p.m. The Democratic National Convention is next week, and so we're going to have a lot of media around that, a lot of events, overwhelmingly virtual events. But stay tuned for some of that will be coming at us. Judy, to you and Tina, thank you, as always, for your leadership and for being here. Pat, Matt Platkin, Jared, Dan, the rest of the team who are here every day. Tahesha, a real treat to have you here. Again, you wear many important hats for the state. Census we discussed, voting we discussed. I can't think of two more important ones, so thank you for your leadership. Diana Gonzalez, honored to have you here and thank you for your stepping in as an interim leader of the Office of Higher Education, stepping into the shoes of our Head of Policy, Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis who is with us today.

To everybody out there, thank you. Please keep it up. Remember, we're watching particularly through the eyes, Pat, of law enforcement, we're watching really closely, folks. We can't let our hair down. It's a hot summer weekend. It's the exact time we want to be at our shore, at our lakes, enjoying ourselves outdoors, doing the right thing with face coverings, social distance, enjoying yourselves. We're not trying to be killjoys. None of us, this is not something, you don't put a face covering and say gosh, I can't wait to get my face covering on. No one is saying that, including us, including yours truly. But you folks have been extraordinary. Please keep up the great work. And with that, we will get through this together, stronger than ever before as one New Jersey family. Thank you all. God bless.

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