

Governor Phil Murphy

# TRANSCRIPT: June 29th, 2020 Coronavirus Briefing Media

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**Governor Phil Murphy:** Good afternoon. With me 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. Another guy who needs no introduction, the man to my left, the Superintendent of the State Police Colonel, Pat Callahan. Jared Maples is with us, Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. Thank you all for sticking with us today.

We just finished a short while ago a White House VTC, so that's why we're a little bit later than usual. I thought it was actually a productive one. We know that things are raging in some states in America. Dr. Tony Fauci was on, Dr. Debbie Birx was on by remote from New Mexico, Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Vice President, Admiral Giroir, good discussion.

Today our shopping malls are reopening to limited capacity and we are preparing for the reopening of outdoor amusement centers as well on Thursday, along with many indoor recreational facilities, as well as our museums and libraries. However, today, we must hit pause on the resumption of indoor dining, which was also to resume this coming Thursday. Under our revised plan, indoor dining will now be reset to resume at a later date, to be determined. Given the current situation in numerous other states, as I mentioned, we do not believe it is prudent at this time to push forward with what is, in effect, a sedentary indoor activity, especially when we know that this virus moves differently indoors than out, making it even more deadly. We have seen spikes in other states driven in part by the return of patrons to indoor dining establishments where they are seated and without face coverings for significant periods of time. We do not wish to see New Jersey

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experience a similar spike. We have been cautious throughout every step of our restart, and have always said that we would not hesitate to hit pause, if needed, to safeguard public health and this is one of those times. It brings me no joy to do this, but we have no choice.

We are also moved to take this step because of what we have seen in some establishments across the state of late. We have all seen the scenes, overcrowding, a complete disregard for social distancing, very few, if any, face coverings. Now certainly I recognize, we recognize, that there are many more establishments whose owners, managers and customers have been responsible and who have lived up to not just the letter of the guidance we have released, but the spirit of community and helping to protect patrons and residents. But other scenes cannot continue, and we cannot move forward unless there is complete compliance.

And it only takes one. The carelessness of one establishment can completely undo the good work of many others. We will not tolerate outlier bars and restaurants and frankly, patrons who think the rules don't apply to them. They are the ones who ruin it for everyone else. Compliance is not a polite suggestion. It is required. Selflessness, not selfishness. So unfortunately, the national situation, compounded by instances of knucklehead behavior here at home, are requiring us to hit pause on the restart of indoor dining for the foreseeable future.

Additionally, next week we anticipate the beginning of outdoor-only graduation ceremonies at many school districts. Again, social distancing must be adhered to and face coverings must be worn. I'm not sure if you saw this, but what happened last week in Westchester County, New York cannot happen here. One student returned from a vacation in Florida for their high school graduation. That student, it turns out, had been exposed to COVID-19 while on that getaway and proceeded to spread it to four classmates. And by the way, this was a drive-thru graduation, not even a sit-down one. I know graduates and their families are going to want to celebrate a graduation, but this is not an excuse for letting down our guard. No one who has traveled through a COVID-19 hotspot, whether a student or family member, should be participating in or attending a graduation ceremony. We need to use our common sense for the common good. Regardless of where you are, social distancing must be observed and face coverings must be worn when you're around others. If you have recently been to a COVID-19 hotspot, you should be self-quarantining and getting yourself tested and tested again, to ensure you are not unwittingly carrying this virus.

We are going to be announcing more deaths from COVID-19 in a few minutes. Because of all the work we have put in over the past three months, we have driven the number of residents dying from COVID-19 down significantly, but we are still losing them. We still have nearly 1,000 people with COVID-19 in our hospitals. Yes, the numbers are allowing us to move forward with our restart, but we cannot think for one moment that this is behind us. We have to learn from our sister states which are now battling for their lives. We were there not that long ago, none of us – none of us – want to go back through that hell. We've worked too hard to get here.

Confidence in our restart is higher across the Northeast than it is in any other part of the country, and that's, by the way, consumer sentiment, and that's for a reason. We took the steps together as states and together as millions of residents to protect our communities. We're undertaking our restarts in responsible and measured ways to ensure you all stay protected. We're continuing to follow the science and the data to determine our steps forward. We're doing this, we hope at every turn, the right way. So should you. Again use your common sense for the common good.

Before I move to the overnight numbers, I want to thank our partners at the Communication Workers of America for ratifying the agreement we reached with them last week to protect against layoffs, as our state works to keep our financial house solid in the wake of COVID-19. As I mentioned last week when this agreement was announced, we worked hard with CWA to structure the newly agreed-to furloughs and deferment of cost of living adjustments to maximize state savings while minimizing the financial impact on our hard-working employees. Once again, I want to thank CWA's leadership and members for their willingness to sit in partnership and to negotiate in good faith. We have reached the best possible outcome for our state, our workers and our taxpayers.

On a separate note today, Judy, you will be issuing an Executive Directive exempting doulas from the current limits on support persons allowed to be present throughout a women's hospital stay. We know doulas play an important role for many expectant and new mothers and are an important part of the First Lady's efforts

through her statewide Nurture NJ campaign to reduce maternal health disparities among our communities of color. I am pleased, if not I'll say thrilled, that the department is able to take this step today.

Now let's take a look at the overnight numbers. Today we reported another 156 positive test results, the cumulative total is now 171,272. We had some technical issues, so there might be a few cases that are not counted. We'll come back to you and make that up tomorrow. The daily positivity rate for tests recorded last Thursday, which is June 25<sup>th</sup>, was 1.92%. And that is a good sign. And the rate of transmission remains unchanged from Friday at 0.86.

And if you need a reason for why we cannot let up on our vigilance the RT, or rate of transmission, is a prime example. When we moved to stage two our RT, or rate of transmission, was hovering at about 0.70 and we knew that as more businesses began to reopen, we would see an increase as more people got out and moved about. We've been able to keep this increase in check, but we know that we can also quickly lose control of this virus, and keeping this number from going higher remains a top priority.

And as we've noted before, so much of the data we need comes from testing. Over the past two weeks, we have, on multiple occasions, met our goal of providing at least 20,000 tests a day. We have more than the capacity to do this every single day, but we also need you to go out and get tested. We have been very consistent in the number of tests we're providing per 100,000 residents, but we're no longer number one. Only you can get us back to the top spot where we belong. Knowing your COVID-19 status is critical to ensuring your health and your community's health, so go to [covid19.nj.gov/testing](https://covid19.nj.gov/testing) to find a site near you. Getting tested is easy and it is painless. Before you move, Dan, I will just say this. The reason we're not number one is demand, not supply. We have the supply, folks, so please go out and get tested. There's no reason, literally, not to.

Moving on to our hospitals, last night's report, 978 residents hospitalized for COVID-19, the number of patients requiring intensive or critical care 225; ventilators in use 185. There were 45 new admissions of COVID-positive cases yesterday, while 70 live patients left our hospitals. These numbers continue to fuel positive trends, the number of patients in our hospitals is below 1,000 and the number of those on ventilators is now below 200. And it has been a long, long time since we've seen those kind of numbers, Judy.

But those numbers only tell part of our story. Here's the other half. We are now losing ground that we have made up in terms of our ranking among states and the number of new cases, and our standing with regard to the number of patients in our hospitals and deaths in comparison to other states is unchanged. We want to keep dropping on all three of those metrics. And today, we are reporting an additional 18 confirmed positive deaths, and the total number of those we have lost, confirmed to have had COVID-19, is now a staggering 13,138 which is extraordinary.

I want to begin in our capital city of Trenton, which is the home of Carlos and Maria Mendez. Is one of you Julia? Julia, what an incredible honor to have you here. Bless you. And you are? What's your name? Sherry? Nice to have you here as well. Julia, I'm honored to talk about your parents right in front of you, and it's an honor to meet you face to face. If it were for any other reason, it would be a real treat, but it is, as I say, an honor to meet you.

So again, this is Carlos and Maria Mendez. They were both residents of Trenton's proud Guatemalan community and had both come to this country 48 years ago for better job opportunities for themselves and a better life for their children. Carlos, a huge soccer fan I'm told, was a machine operator for General Motors Corporation in Ewing Township for 18 years. Maria was a housekeeper at Princeton University's Cap and Gown Club for 22 years. They were both hardworking and humble. They were well respected by colleagues and their community, and they both loved their family more than anything else.

Carlos passed away on May 12<sup>th</sup> at the age of 74. Maria passed just three days later, on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 77. They leave behind their daughter Julia, who is with us today, with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, son Gilbert, and their spouses along with six grandchildren, Diego, Daniel, Anthony, Angel, Christian and John and many nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends. They came to this country in search of their American dream, and they found it here in New Jersey. We honor them for being part of our family. May God bless them both, May God bless you Julia, your brother and your families. Thank you for coming out today.

Next we head to Essex County, the lifelong home of Louis Raimondi. Louis was 86 years old when COVID-19 took him away. A Newark native and a United States Army veteran, he most recently lived in West Orange. But for 60 of his years, Louis called Bloomfield home. He spent this career in service to the township and its residents, retiring in 1996 as Supervisor of Trees, and he had the pleasure of working alongside his son Joe with whom I had the great honor of speaking yesterday, for 16 of those years. He is being remembered as a hardworking family man and one of the truly nice guys, and a man who remained young at heart, riding motorcycles until he was 70 years old and playing games on his phone, rooting for the Yankees – God willing, they'll play again – and listening to music and very often singing along with it.

Louis is now reunited with his beloved late wife Carmela, who he lost to cancer 12 years ago, and he leaves behind his children Louis, Joe – I mentioned I spoke with Joe yesterday – and Lisa and their spouses, grandchildren Ashley, Benjamin, Carey, Christopher, Gina, Frank and Alyssa and five great-grandchildren. He's also survived by his sisters, Connie, Annette, Gilda and Eleanor and numerous nieces and nephews. He will not be forgotten. Louis, we thank you for your career of service to our nation, and to the Township of Bloomfield. May God bless you and watch over you and your family.

So as we remember three extraordinary lives lost, Carlos, Maria, and Louis, and as we remember all who we have lost, may we also be reminded of why we cannot let up in fighting this virus in every way we know how. By social distancing, by washing our hands frequently with soap and water or using hand sanitizer, by wearing something over our face. Tomorrow we will remember more of those who we have lost, and we'll do so again the day after tomorrow. And just remember, the face covering doesn't do you any good if it's not covering both your nose and your mouth. A face covering is how you protect others, especially if you are asymptomatic and have not gotten tested.

I cannot put it any other way. This war is not over. We are still fighting, and right now we cannot fall into complacency. In fact, keeping up the fight is even more important now to prevent us from backsliding. Over three months, we've shown that we can work together for the common good. No state has done better than New Jersey. For three months, we have pulled together as one New Jersey family, first to flatten the curve and then to bend it down. We cannot let up. We must continue to drive it into the ground. We cannot think that because it is the other states that are now facing what we were facing a few weeks ago that we're in the clear; we have to keep pulling together. We have to keep up with our common sense practices.

Someone last week tweeted at me the following, and I quote the tweet. "At first I hated you for everything you put in place due to the virus. But after suffering a death in my family, I just want to thank you for everything you have put in place for the safety of everyone." My God, that is it in a nutshell. This isn't about any single one of us, it's about all of us who don't have to go through what Julia has gone through in losing not just one but both of her parents. And if we can prevent just one more family from having to live through the grief of losing someone from COVID-19, especially now that we know what we need to do to protect our loved ones, our friends and our communities, then it will, in the final analysis, be worth it. So keep it up. We will win this, we will win this together.

And as I turn things over to Judy, folks are born and folks die in this state actually, as we've mentioned on many occasions, completely unrelated to COVID-19 and I want to give a shout out to my late friend Al Iverson, who died over the weekend in Montclair, New Jersey. To Rosemary and his family, he was a giant and our thoughts, hearts and prayers are 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. In late March, as COVID-19 cases continued to increase in our state, the Department issued guidance allowing expectant mothers to have one support person alongside them during this life-changing event. This individual could be the patient's spouse, partner, sibling or another person she chose, but it was limited to one person. Recognizing the role of doulas as an essential part of an expectant mother's care team, today the department is issuing an Executive Directive exempting doulas from limits on support persons throughout the woman's hospital stay. Doulas support healthy pregnancies by providing culturally appropriate, social and emotional support to pregnant women throughout their prenatal period, labor and delivery, as well as their postpartum period. Research demonstrates that support from a doula is associated with lower caesarean rates, fewer

obstetric interventions, fewer complications, and the improved health of mothers and babies after delivery. Support persons and doulas will be screened for symptoms and undergo temperature checks prior to entering the clinical area and every 12 hours following. Once in the labor and delivery unit, they will be extremely limited and will not have access to other areas of the hospital. Additionally, all pregnant patients must be tested for COVID-19 when they present at the facility or prior to admission for labor and delivery.

As many of you know, doulas have long been engaged to support women during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum. They have been integral to the administration's effort to increase outreach, support and services to women, particularly of color, to improve health and birth outcomes. And more importantly, they are an essential source of comfort and strength for a mom-to-be and her partner. With this new directive, expectant mothers will have additional physical and emotional support at what can be a joyful but also a stressful time.

Moving on to my daily report, as the Governor shared, our hospitals reported 978 hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients, with 225 individuals in critical care, and 82% of those patients are on ventilators. Fortunately, there were no new reports of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children since Friday, so the total remains at 47 cases in our state. The children affected have either tested positive for active COVID-19 or had antibody tests that were positive.

The Governor reviewed the new cases and deaths reported today. In terms of deaths, the breakdown of deaths by race and ethnicity is as follows: White 54.1%, Black 18.8%, Hispanic 20.3%, Asian 5.6% and other 1.7%. At the veterans homes, the numbers remain the same and at our state psychiatric hospitals, among a census of 1,240, one additional patient has tested positive.

The daily percent positivity as of June 25th overall in New Jersey is 1.92%, the Northern part of the state 1.46%, Central 1.95%, and the Southern part of the state 3.53%. So that concludes my daily statistical report. Stay connected, stay safe, stay healthy and get tested. Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Judy, thank you and great news on doulas so hats off to you and the team. With that, let's turn to Colonel Pat Callahan for anything he's got on his docket. Pat, as always, thanks for being here and for your leadership.

**State Police Superintendent Col. Patrick Callahan:** Thank you, Governor, good afternoon. With regard to compliance over the weekend, the same gym in Linden was cited twice for an EO violation. As I had said last week, Linden Police Department and local health officials would be monitoring that gym. The gym owner voluntarily remained closed and locked up today, which we were happy to report.

On a separate note, I'm glad to report that Trooper Sierra from that wicked dump truck accident on the turnpike was discharged over the weekend and is recovering at home and doing well. And that's all I got, Gov.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Amazing. God bless that guy. I had, as I mentioned, a great conversation with him, so please give him our best. Perhaps he'll be running next spring's 5-k with you and me and the Attorney General if we get back to running races. Matt, we're going to start over here. Before we do, we will be together at one o'clock, Dan Bryan tells me, tomorrow and we'll be with you this week unless you hear otherwise. My guess is we'll be moving it around a little bit, at least on Wednesday in terms of timing.

A couple of things I wanted to say that are somewhat in Judy's lane and somewhat, Pat, in your lane. First of all, I've been asked this question about asking folks, strongly advising folks to self-quarantine and get tested if they've been in a hotspot, is that some kind of retaliation? It has literally, it's never occurred to us. It's never come up in our conversations. Again, repeat, we have lived through hell in this state to get to where we are of the rates of transmission and spot positivity. Everything we do is to keep that progress up. And so this is simply, frankly I never thought I'd say these words. If I could build a wall around us or around our region, I would, but we can't and so we have to rely on personal responsibility and the right behavior, the common sense for the common good.

And by the way, we do nothing but pray and root for the states. I don't care what their political stripe is. There are states right now that are going through hell, the same hell that we went through and they have nothing but our prayers and support that they're able to do the right things and get through this as quickly as possible. It is pretty clear, some things we've talked about now for weeks, it's pretty clear it's not just the case in New Jersey, it's the case everywhere. Outdoors is an easier mark than indoors. Social distancing actually

matters. Staying away from everybody else if you don't feel well matters. Getting yourself tested, particularly when you have capacity, as we do, matters. Wearing face coverings really makes a difference, particularly for those around you, washing with soap and water. Those are basic precepts that have been proven time and time and time again to be the foundations for a healthier, a better public health reality, which as we've said, leads to a better and stronger economic health reality. And it's in that order, and what those states are going through is no different than what we've gone through.

We were going to show up and name and shame a couple of places, and we decided not to, but we will do that probably sooner than later. Even when you're outdoors, Judy and Pat, you can't have situations -- and again, I'm not going to name them, but there are bars and we all know them, even outdoors, where people are packed on top of each other. That's not the spirit, folks. That's not what we're asking for. Keep your distance and by the way, too few face coverings, I have to say. Keep away from each other and keep your face covered. There's no political statement you're making, you're making the statement that you're smart and you're doing your part to deal with this.

And whenever it is that we get inside, we had a very robust discussion as we made the decision this morning to delay indoor dining. It's also important that whenever we get to that, that we have the indoor bar configured properly. I think, Judy, you made the point frankly, that's as big a risk on the inside is the indoor dining piece. If anything, maybe even a slightly bigger risk because your ability to social distance is more limited. And so we want to make this perfectly clear. Whenever it is we do go inside, the bar is there exclusively to serve drinks to people who are seated at a table. It's not there to congregate in the bar, whatever it is we get there. We know that inside is dangerous and hard and challenging, including indoor dining, sadly, but even more challenging and more dangerous is congregating at an indoor bar on top of each other. We just can't let that happen. So I wanted to make sure I got those points out there.

With that, Elise, we'll start with you. Good afternoon.

#### Q&A Session

**Elise Young, Bloomberg:** Hi, good afternoon. Questions on two topics. Are casinos still going to reopen on July 2<sup>nd</sup> as planned? And regarding the furloughs agreement, in explainers posted to its website, the union said the coronavirus crisis was more disastrous than the great recession and would last for longer, and yet it told members that they won't have to quote, "sacrifice as much as they did in 2009." The union also said it won a no-layoffs agreement through December 2021 quote, "no matter what happens with the economy." Is this a fair burden and risk for taxpayers? Have you boxed yourself in on labor costs if the economy takes another hit in the next 18 months? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Elise, on casinos if I didn't say this already, I meant to, casinos will open on limited capacity on July 2. And let me just sit on that for a minute. Matt Platkin's joined us, he can hit the second question. I've not seen the posting so I will defer on that if I could. But by the way, I think we should all be prepared for this thing to come back, so this is not a forever and always. I hope it is, by the way, that spot positivity rate of 1.92 but I'm fearful it isn't.

We have made a decision and I feel as much as it brings me no joy, I feel comfortable in the distinction that actually sitting, sedentary, close proximity with social distancing, ventilation as it is indoors and by definition, not being able to wear one of these over your face is a game changer. If you look at the other inside things that we're allowing to go forward, casino, library, museum to pick three, face coverings are absolutely mandatory, required, and you don't have quite, if not nearly the same sedentary, close proximity reality that you do with indoor dining.

Again, accepting that I've not seen the post and that I will just say to you, we're not out of the woods yet, I'll ask Matt to comment if he could. Matt, welcome.

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Thanks, Governor. I haven't seen the post either so I can't respond to the specifics said there. What I would say is we worked very hard with the union to structure this agreement such that we could take advantage of the CARES Act Supplemental Unemployment Benefits, which expire at the end of the month. That's something that wasn't in effect in 2009. So in that sense, it's true. The deal does have more days in terms of total furlough days than they had in 2009.

I think it's also important to note that we have 10,000 fewer employees today than we did in 2009 and as we're going through some very complex furlough plans in light of the agreement, the operational impacts of this are not easy to manage. But obviously, the departments are doing the best they can under the circumstances.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. Nikita, good afternoon.

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** Good afternoon, Governor. So I have a couple of questions. First off, I thought that you'd like to know that your ballot has reached the Monmouth County Board of Elections but despite that, we're still getting problems with computer glitches and other delays associated with processing ballots. We're told that the backlog in some places for processing ballot applications is now as long as four or five days, with clerks literally under the gun at this point. Is your confidence still high in this regard? Is it acceptable if voters receive their ballot after July 7? And would you be open to using FedEx or some other private firm that can guarantee next-day delivery if you come basically down under the wire? And will you order state and county election officials to work on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> if they need to get ballots out the door?

And then the Motor Vehicle Commission says they are unaware problems related to voter registration. Now, I don't know that you would know why members of the Natural Law Party, which has been defunct for 16 years, saw their registration jump from 296 to more than 7,000 but if you have a guess, I would love to hear it.

And then finally --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Let's make this your last one, if you could.

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** Yeah, this is the last one, I promise.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Unless you have a PowerPoint presentation, in which case I'll come around and sit out there and watch it for you.

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** So Monmouth and Princeton dropped Woodrow Wilson's name from a couple of their buildings and their schools, and you stopped using his desk. I'm wondering, do you think that there should be a discussion about Rutgers possibly renaming itself, because Henry Rutgers was a slave owner?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I was going to ask whether or not you were going to give me credit for having swapped my desk out, and you were made aware of that, I assume, through your colleague. I'm glad to hear my ballot made it, that's good news. Further proof that I voted. Again, I've got no observations on the specifics of the glitches or delays. I don't know that FedEx is going to be involved and I've not made any decision on making people work on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, so I don't have any crisp answers. But if you do have specifics, as we've said to many of you folks, if you know something we don't know, bless you, get the information to us and I promise you we'll follow up on it.

Were you connecting the Motor Vehicles with the party that you refer to? Sorry, I --

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** My understanding, our understanding is that there's some sort of glitch with voter registration at the MVC when it gathers data when people get a new license or what have you. Through that process, somehow, we're not sure of the specifics, but people are being registered to parties that don't --

**Governor Phil Murphy:** To that party?

**Nikita Biryukov, New Jersey Globe:** That party and others that are similarly defunct.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** We're going to have to follow up with you. Dan, will you help me out there? I've got literally no insight on this. I applaud Princeton, in all seriousness. I did swap out my desk at the end of the week, and Princeton renamed its School of International Affairs over the weekend and I applaud them for doing that. I think we've had this conversation before on Wilson, on Columbus, I've not been asked the question on Rutgers so that's something I'm not going to speak to specifically but it seems to me we ought to be able to get to a better place. If there are symbols, statutes, names that somehow separate us as a society, somehow offend people, and slave ownership has got to be on that list. Bigoted, racist behavior has got to be on that list. And as I mentioned with Columbus, I don't see any reason why we can't on the one side, if the

statute offends folks that we can't address that, and at the same time, still feel great pride in our Italian American heritage and find other ways to celebrate that. So I'll come back to you on Rutgers. I've not ever been asked that question, but that's a general sort of precept for me, a general frame would be that. Thank you. Dave, nice haircut.

**David Levinsky, Burlington County Times:** Thank you, Governor, Joanne gets the credit for that. Let's see here. Is there concern that the pause for indoor dining could actually crush many of the restaurants that are in this industry? I know that they've talked a lot about, you know, barely hanging on. They were looking forward to this. Obviously, there are concerns and you've made a decision here but what will it take to green light indoor dining? Specifically less knucklehead behavior, less sloppiness? How are we going to measure this? And do you think this would be days or weeks?

And then last topic for question here, now that the CWA deal has been done, can you give us details about specifically how much money does this save the state budget in the short term? Are the savings worth the concession of agreeing not to lay off workers through the end of 2021? And what is the state's understanding of the layoffs portion of the agreement? I guess this is similar to the question that was asked previously by Elise, but at the time where, you know, we don't really know what's going to happen with the economy, is there a concern that by guaranteeing nobody's going to get laid off that this puts an unfair burden on the private industry?

And finally, are you concerned about having workers furloughed over the next four weeks or so, right at the same time when many agencies like the MVC are reopening? Thank you.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** I'll start, Dave and asked Matt to come in and join me. Am I concerned about the livelihood, the viability of the hospitality industry? Absolutely. Period. I have a bigger concern about people getting sick inside establishments, reigniting a wave, and then devastating both those establishments as well as our economy. We haven't put the sign up lately, public health creates economic health, but sometimes that sucks, and this is one of those moments where you'd love to be able to have it both ways. We just don't feel that we can take that step responsibly, and I think Judy and Pat and the rest of us, Tina, would agree.

What are we looking for? Well, the things that have really concerned us, Judy's seen without getting into where, but Judy's given us some data on rates of transmission that have been spiking in this region outside of New Jersey based on indoor activities, indoor dining. The raging in other states in the country right now and the prospect that that could come back in here through the back door. We have seen our RT bump up, basically sitting at around 0.7 plus or minus and then for the past week, week-and-a-half, mid to high 0.8's. You can almost extrapolate that that was going to go up another bit and it gets over one at that point.

I haven't said this in a while. Paul Mulshine asked me this probably now six or eight weeks ago. But if you look at the models that Judy and Tina and their team follows at any moment in time, making a decision to shut down and or to keep shut down and seeing the implications of that two weeks later, versus taking a step to open up and looking at the different reality in terms of transmission is dramatic. I don't think it's a matter of days, but it's a matter of weeks. And again, we have enormous sympathy, but the alternative here is worse and unacceptable.

Matt, could you comment on anything related to Dave's questions about -- the savings are, we think, north of \$100 million and that's meaningful and we need every penny of that. Beyond that, any color?

**Chief Counsel Matt Platkin:** Yeah, I think I addressed some of it earlier, Dave. With respect to the operational impacts in the next month, it's obviously a challenge. The departments are working intensely to put together plans to minimize the operational impacts. And, you know, we are hopeful that we'll be able to manage it through the next month and we think this is a fair deal for the state, and we think it's a fair deal for the workers of the state, who are also residents of the state, overwhelmingly. So it represents a culmination of a long negotiation and like I said, I think it produces substantial savings for the state and a fair deal for all parties involved.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** By the way, it is not as though we sit here with a smorgasbord of happy choices on a lot of these decisions. Thank you. Sir, do you have anything? You're good. Okay. We good? You're good? Matt, down here. Sorry -- you were good sir, right? Okay. Hey, Matt.

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** Hi, Governor. On Friday, the largest hospital chain in the state relaxed its visitation policy. Hackensack Meridian Health allows one visitor at a time. I'm curious if the state authorized this or provided any guidance on how visits should resume?

Governor, with the caution on graduations that you just gave, are you considering backing off that 500-person limit for July 6<sup>th</sup> for outdoor gatherings? Curious what sort of crackdown, if any, could any of these violators, the restaurants, outdoor dining, expect and how does hitting pause on indoor dining affect weddings and banquet halls? Is there any effect there?

And just lastly, Governor, I'm curious have you at any time eaten inside a restaurant since you signed an Executive Order that would prohibit indoor dining?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Sorry, on indoor dining – okay. Judy, you want to take number one, Hackensack allowing visitors?

**Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli:** I think it was EO 145 did identify, along with elective surgeries, visitation requirements which allows a visitor. We did just recently discussed at the department that there seemed to be some confusion because it was embedded in another guidance, so we may put out something individually just for visitation, hopefully this week.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Indoor dining is, Matt, connected, sadly, with banquet halls. That was one question you asked. Other than me eating indoors, which I'm going to jump on with both feet in a second, but you had something else in there?

**Matt Arco, Star-Ledger:** It was about you giving caution on graduations. Do you have any reservations about the 500-person limit coming up?

**Governor Phil Murphy:** We're not changing that at this point. And again, those are outdoors and we're asking and folks have -- there was one school district that was trying to do otherwise, but for the most part, people have been overwhelmingly good about that. Beginning July 6, so a week from today, and the limits were, at least as of this moment we're comfortable with but again, it's outdoors, social distancing, etc.

Not only have I not eaten indoors other than in my house, but I just want to talk about the irresponsibility of not your question, because I'm thrilled you asked it. The irresponsibility of folks sending a post around like that and then elected leaders actually tagging on to that and talking about hypocrisy.

First of all, not only did I eat outside with my wife, daughter and her friend on Saturday night, we sat in the driving rain and I've ruined everything in my pockets, including my wallet that I've been cherishing, holding on to for many years. In fact, I can show you there's not much in it, but this is a brand new wallet as of today. I tried to salvage my wallet over the weekend, it was not salvageable.

But here's where I've got a thick skin or you wouldn't be in this line of business. I have no issue as it relates to me but here's where I had the issue. If someone out there implies that, hey, even he's doing this, so that means you can do it. If one person gets infected as a result of that, or if one person goes to the hospital as a result of that, or God forbid, as Julia has lived through, someone's life is lost as a result of that, because they know that that's not true, that's blood on their hands, man. I don't know how you can live with yourself.

So folks, I would just say this. I don't care if you agree with me on politics. I don't really care what you think of me personally, I think you probably know that by now. This is for the greater good, everybody. This is to behave responsibly, to do the right thing. Okay? So forget about the cheap shots. Don't do something. If there's an implication, if there's an unintended consequence that somebody could get sick as a result, because that would be really bad and really stupid. So Matt, thank you for asking that. Dustin, good afternoon.

**Dustin Racioppi, Bergen Record:** Good afternoon. Will you sign the Senate President's NJ Aid Bill that offers teachers new health insurance plans, and is expected to save hundreds of millions of dollars a year? And as well as the bill that passed today for police departments to share internal affairs and personnel files?

On voting, county clerks have told us they weren't ready for an all-mail election and hope that if you make the decision that November will be all-mail, you'll make that call in the next few weeks. Can you comment on that?

And then, as far as the Woodrow Wilson stuff goes, can you just explain how you made that decision and the timing of it with the desk? Woodrow Wilson's racist views and policies have been pretty well known for years. How do you square that gesture of getting rid of the desk and something like marching in the Black Lives Matter protests with plans to cut funding for anti-bias training and other programs at the core of the national movement for racial justice? Thanks.

**Governor Phil Murphy:** Thank you. I won't comment on the specific bills, but if the first bill is Chapter 78 Reform, which I think it is, is that the first one you asked about? That's something conceptually I've said for five, six, seven years, maybe longer, that conceptually we're behind and transparency, we are big believers in. I think Pat's been a leader on that, but again, I'll leave those as a general comment.

I believe I understood the question here. We won't make a decision on what November looks like until we have a good look at what July 7<sup>th</sup> looked like, so there's no decisions there made at all, and you're probably not surprised by that. We want to see how we do here. And not just make that call on July 8<sup>th</sup> either, to Nikita's questions over the past couple of weeks, to really have a chance to do a post mortem. As you all know, we've extended, or as you may recall, the amount of time between post marking on the date of election and when you could count the ballot, which is now a week; that's up from three days.

Listen, I think the country is having a reckoning and Woodrow Wilson and his legacy is being swept up in that, as it should be. And so I actually have been going to work forgetting, honestly, that the plaque is on the front of the desk that says it was his desk. A desk is a desk, and I thought it was very responsibly raised and as soon as I could get a replacement, which was not as easy as I thought, I got one and I think that was the right thing to do. And I remain honored that I marched in both Hillside and attended the vigil in Westfield.

The battlefield right now is strewn with mandates and programs that we can't fund and it's across the entire spectrum of things that we hold dear, including some of the examples that you laid out. We just don't have the money, and so we need the Senate to move forward on allowing us to borrow. That's where the focus should be right now. The Assembly has done that. I applaud them. There has been, I think there's decent progress with the Senate, but we've got to see it actually happen and it needs to happen soon, because it's going to take us a while just by nature of the federal program to go through the process to actually bond and raise that money. And then it's not either or, we also are going to need direct federal cash assistance, and that need is going up and not down. You're starting to see the narrative melt away, not surprisingly, that this was a legacy state issue or a Northeastern state issue or a blue state issue. It's an American issue, and it's a smart thing to do from every perspective, both political parties, etc.

And we need both. And if we get both, we'll be able to fund those programs. So we're ready. We want to fund them. There's a whole range of programs that we're desperately hoping to get back to be able to fund and put up and running, but without the ability from the Senate to borrow, or the Congress and the White House to give us a bill that has direct cash assistance, we won't be able to do that, and that breaks my heart. It shouldn't be that way.

So I'm going to have a quick sip and mask up, Judy, is that all right? I want to thank Judy and Tina for not just being here today, but for everything. Pat, likewise, Jared, Matt, Dan, the whole squad. Julia, it's an honor to meet you like this. I hope that at some point once this passes, as I mentioned to you on the phone yesterday, we have the chance to meet with our families but it's an honor to meet you and God bless your mom and dad. Thank you, Sherry, for coming along with her. Don't you work for the State Police? Yeah, that's what I thought. So you've got the boss here to my left. But God bless you and again, God bless your mom and dad.

To each and every one of you, thank you for everything you're doing. Please bear with us. This is not, you know, you don't take decisions like the one we took today on indoor dining easily. One thing I didn't say other than getting completely, when I say soaking wet, I mean soaking wet on Saturday night, Mother Nature has been generally good. And I'll tell you what's been really good is that municipalities have worked with restaurants really creatively to allow much bigger footprints, whether it's in parking lots, sidewalks, between buildings – do it safely, by the way, that's important. But the footprints of outdoor dining have been really creative and have grown dramatically and increasingly, you're seeing some more over the Tapia which is great. Let's keep that up, folks. That can hopefully offset some of the pain preventing us to get on the inside as soon as we would like. But no state's done what we've done, and to each and every one of you out there,

it's all on you. You've been extraordinary but we can't let up. We're seeing Arizona, Florida, Texas, parts of California, South Carolina, Oklahoma. Keep them in your prayers, keep vigilant. Let's make sure that doesn't reemerge here. Keep doing the right thing, as you have been doing. God bless you all.

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