

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Prohibit Employers from Terminating or Refusing to Reinstate an Employee Who Misses Work Due to an Infectious Disease

03/20/2020

Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (A3848), which prohibits an employer, during the ongoing Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency declared by the Governor in Executive Order 103, from terminating or refusing to reinstate an employee who has, or is likely to have, an infectious disease which requires the employee to miss time at work.

Under the bill, an employee who requests or takes time off from work, based on the recommendation of a medical professional, may not be terminated or refused reinstatement if the employee is likely to infect others in the workplace.

"Our message in New Jersey has been loud and clear: if you're sick, stay home," **said Governor Murphy**. "No one should fear retribution from their employer for an absence deemed necessary by a medical professional, particularly for an illness as communicable as COVID-19. Every New Jerseyan has a role to play in our mitigation efforts and staying away from others when you're sick is perhaps the most important thing you can do right now."

"There's no getting around it. When someone is diagnosed with coronavirus, they will need to be quarantined and off from work for at least 14 days," **said Assemblywoman Lopez**. "Unfortunately, some workers will not have enough sick leave or vacation days to cover their full recovery, and may feel at risk of losing their jobs. We would never want an employee to go to work when they're ill – especially with a communicable disease like the novel coronavirus – and risk the health of themselves and others."

"These job protections can contribute significantly to limiting the spread of COVID-19," **Assemblywoman Munoz**. "We are giving everyone the tools they need to put their health and the health of others first, without fear of losing their jobs."

"No employee should have to worry about whether or not they will lose their job because they need time off to recover from novel coronavirus," **said Assemblywoman Downey**. "At a time of so much unease, we should be able to assure employment protections for all."

At a moment of tremendous fear and anxiety, nobody should have to choose between their job and their health," **said Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg**. "We are calling for strict observance of social distancing and asking people to stay home if they have any signs of illness but we can't ask that of them unless we also ensure they will have a job to go back to after this crisis passes. I'm heartened to see the Governor take such immediate action on such a crucial aspect of these public health measures necessary to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus outbreak."

  
Back  
to top

# Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

## Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/fl/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/bca/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

## Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

## News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation](#)

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

## Social

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[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

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