

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Surpasses 300 Grants of Clemency In Seventh Round of Historic Initiative

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TRENTON – On the one year anniversary of his first grants of clemency, Governor Phil Murphy today announced the seventh round of clemency actions as a part of his Administration’s historic effort to provide second chances and legal relief to New Jerseyans involved in the justice system. In this milestone round, the Governor exercised his executive authority to grant seven commutations from parole supervision, two commutations from incarceration, and 15 pardons, bringing the total number of clemency actions to a historic 307 since the initiative’s launch in June 2024.

Under the New Jersey Constitution, the Governor is given broad discretion and the sole authority to issue pardons and commutations to individuals for State criminal convictions.

“As we reach this milestone in our clemency initiative, I reflect on the meaningful steps we have taken over the past year to provide second chances to over 300 deserving individuals,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Granting clemency is a task that should not be taken lightly, and I am incredibly grateful to my exceptional partners on the Clemency Advisory Board and in my office who have worked tirelessly toward our shared obligations of public safety and justice.”

In June 2024 (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240619a.shtml>), Governor Murphy signed

[Executive Order No. 362](#)

(<https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20241216/62/34/eb/61/de22d48e34256866c3ec3042/EO-362.pdf>),

establishing the state’s first-ever Clemency Advisory Board to provide recommendations on individual applications for pardons and commutations. The Order also identified specific categories of applications eligible for expedited review, including non-violent offenders who have remained free from involvement in the justice system for a substantial period of time, individuals serving sentences that reflect excessive trial penalties, and victims of domestic or sexual violence or sex trafficking.

Each individual granted clemency today underwent a comprehensive review process that included a thorough assessment of their criminal history, conduct while incarcerated, evidence of rehabilitation, and reentry readiness. The Clemency Advisory Board also took into account victim feedback, ensuring that efforts were made to contact victims, solicit their input, and connect them with support services if desired.

The Governor’s Office has received more than 4,500 applications for clemency, with most submitted after the Governor’s June 2024 Executive Order. The Governor will consider additional grants of clemency before the end of his


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term.

“As Christmas approaches, we enter a season associated with hope, peace, joy, and love—values that call us to compassion, humility, and the belief that every life has value. This season reminds us that society is strongest when it chooses mercy over fear and restoration over permanent punishment. The story at the heart of Christmas reflects enduring truths about injustice: of one born into modest circumstances, drawn into systems of power and politics, subjected to legal proceedings, declared not guilty, yet denied mercy because doing what was right carried risk. That legacy continues to challenge whether our institutions serve justice or merely preserve convenience,” **said Bishop Joshua Rodriguez, Chair, New Jersey Clemency Advisory Board.** “In this seventh round of clemency, with nearly two dozen pardons and commutations expected, Governor Murphy affirms that accountability and mercy can coexist. These actions recognize transformation, restore families, strengthen communities, and reaffirm our shared commitment to fairness and human dignity. In a season defined by giving, these clemency grants reflect moral leadership. I commend Governor Murphy for choosing courage, compassion, and the restoration of hope.”

The individuals included in this round have demonstrated sustained rehabilitation, long-term stability, and a proven ability to live responsibly within and meaningfully contribute to their communities. A pardon does not erase the facts underlying a conviction, but formally forgives the offense and relieves the recipient of certain collateral consequences. All pardon recipients have remained free from criminal justice system involvement for more than 10 years. A commutation, by contrast, does not forgive the conduct but reduces the sentence currently being served.

The following individuals were granted a pardon today:

1. **Beasley, Samad:** Robbery, sentenced in 1987; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone, sentenced in 1990; failure to dispose a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1993; criminal restraint, sentenced in 1994; making a false report (two counts) and resisting arrest, sentenced in 1996; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance in a school zone (two counts), sentenced in 1996; possession of a controlled dangerous substance (two counts), sentenced in 1999; conspiracy (to possess a controlled dangerous substance), sentenced in 2004
2. **Chiatti, Reginald:** Robbery, sentenced in 2002
3. **Cill, Lincoln:** Robbery, sentenced in 1991; theft by deception, sentenced in 1998
4. **Deloatch-Alexander, Nichella:** Shoplifting, sentenced in 1998; Shoplifting, sentenced in 2000; Shoplifting, sentenced in 2001 and resentenced 2004; Receiving stolen property, and Hindering, sentenced in 2002; Shoplifting, sentenced in 2002; robbery, sentenced in 2003; Theft, sentenced in 2003
5. **Hammary, Darryl:** Possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1992; possession of a controlled dangerous substance and possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance within a school zone (two counts), sentenced in 1992; local ordinance violation, sentenced in 2001; conspiracy and theft, sentenced in 2004; attempt and theft, sentenced in 2004; conspiracy, theft, possession of a controlled dangerous substance, and unlawful possession of a weapon, sentenced in 2004; retaliation against a witness, sentenced in 2004
6. **Harris, Latoyia:** Attempted theft by deception, sentenced in 2002; violation of probation, sentenced in 2005; two counts of theft by deception, sentenced in 2005
7. **Holden, Tyasha:** Endangering the welfare of a child, sentenced in 2009; violation of probation, sentenced in 2013
8. **Iwanga, Robert:** Conspiracy to commit robbery, sentenced in 2000
9. **Jackson, Anthony:** Possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1997
10. **Leak, Brandon:** unlawful possession of a weapon, sentenced in 1995
11. **Mayo, Derek:** Larceny, sentenced in 1982
12. **McDaniel, Vincent:** Conspiracy and two counts of distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2005

13. **Neville, Lindsey:** Robbery, sentenced in 2004
14. **Pollack, Rory:** Ordinance violations, sentenced in 2009; identity theft, sentenced in 2012; possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 2012
15. **Scian, III, Michael:** Criminal mischief and harassment, sentenced in 2001; distribution of a controlled dangerous substance and possession with intent to distribute controlled dangerous substance within 500 feet of a public place, sentenced in 2005; disorderly conduct, sentenced in 2010

The following individuals were granted commutations of their parole supervision today:

1. **Bandele, Zuberi:** Murder, armed while committing murder, and assault/battery, sentenced in 1979
2. **Dollard, Thomas:** Murder, sentenced in 1991
3. **Henshaw, Antonne:** Murder, possession of a weapon for unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon, hindering, sentenced in 1989
4. **Kadonsky, Steven:** Leader of narcotics ring , Conspiracy, Possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance, Possession of a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1994; conspiracy to possess a controlled dangerous substance, sentenced in 1994; Conspiracy to possess a controlled dangerous substance (five counts), Possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance (five counts), Hindering prosecution (two counts), sentenced in 1995
5. **Komunyaka, Bayete:** Murder, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon, sentenced in 1994
6. **Lee, Wali:** Fraud, sentenced in 1983; robbery, criminal restraint, sentenced in 1985; murder, robbery, unlawful possession of a weapon, and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, sentenced in 1986
7. **McKinnon, Jason:** Leader of Narcotics Trafficking Network, Racketeering, Conspiracy to Manufacture a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession with Intent to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substance (two counts), Committing Drug Offense with Weapon, Certain Persons Not to Have Weapon , sentenced in 2009

The following individuals were granted commutations of their prison sentences today:

1. **Page, David:** Robbery (two counts), possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, unlawful possession of a weapon, and certain person not to have a weapon, sentenced in 2007
2. **Scott, James:** Robbery (nine counts), aggravated assault (three counts), unlawful possession of a weapon (three counts), illegal possession of ammunition, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose (four counts), theft by unlawful taking (two counts), receiving stolen property, certain persons not to possess a weapon, sentenced in 2006

JoEllyn Jones, a member of the Clemency Advisory Board, lost her 19-year-old brother, RJ, to gun violence in 1999. The individual convicted of his murder, Ryan Young, was sentenced to 20 years in prison and later received a reduced sentence of 17 years and six months. Following his release, Jones would see Young around her community, a reminder of the brother she had lost too soon at his hands. One day, Jones approached Young prepared to confront him, instead – to her surprise – she introduced herself and asked to work with Young – realizing that hurting him would not make her feel any better. Today, the two talk on a regular basis – Young has even been to Jones’s house for dinner – and work together in their community.

“It has been a true honor to serve alongside my fellow board members over the past year and a half. Each of us brings a different lived experience to this work, and those perspectives matter deeply when reviewing applications that carry so much weight,” said **JoEllyn Jones, Member, New Jersey Clemency Advisory Board**. “When I read each clemency application, I think not only about the individual seeking relief, but also about the direct and indirect victims who were harmed.”

“My own journey has taught me how complex justice can be,” **said Jones**. “It continues to guide how I approach this work with empathy, with balance, and with hope.”

Governor Murphy signed two grants of clemency during today’s announcement – a pardon for Vincent McDaniel and a commutation for Steven Kadonsky.

Vincent McDaniel, one of the 15 individuals who received a pardon today, spoke about his journey toward redemption while incarcerated and the work he has accomplished since being released from prison.

Vincent McDaniel plead guilty to manufacturing and distributing controlled dangerous substance (CDS) charges and entered into a plea agreement. He served over three years in prison and was on parole for nearly a year after. While incarcerated, McDaniel took meaningful strides to turn his life around. He completed eight sessions of the "Cage Your Rage" anger management program and facilitated anger management and GED tutoring for fellow incarcerated persons. He also completed the Crossroads Addiction Program and earned a certificate in Re-evaluation Counseling at Riverfront State Prison. In the years since his release, McDaniel has contributed to his community and created a lasting positive change in society. He became the Co-chair of the Atlantic County Gun Reduction Initiative, has been an active member of the Atlantic County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) since 2012, was instrumental in the passage of Atlantic City Ordinance No. 83 ("Ban the Box") in 2011 and Ordinance No. 32 (housing reform for returning citizens) in 2017, and has organized annual HBCU college tours for Atlantic City youth since 2011, among other notable achievements. McDaniel is currently employed by the City of Atlantic City, serving as Assistant Director of the One Neighborhood Evolution Anti-Violence Program.

“This pardon is not just a personal milestone; it lifts the invisible handcuffs that remain long after completing a sentence. It allows me to fully engage in our schools, the local juvenile detention center, and the Atlantic County adult facilities, expanding my ability to serve others,” **said Vincent McDaniel**. “I stand here today fully aware of the harm I caused my community, but more energized by the removal of these invisible handcuffs and the possibilities ahead—hoping that my good works, Insha’Allah, can outweigh my past mistakes.”

Steven Kadonsky, one of the seven individuals who a commutation from parole supervision, was represented by his family at today’s announcement. Kadonsky spent 26 years in prison and – until today – has been serving a lifetime parole sentence for several charges, including conspiracy, possession of a CDS, and intent to distribute a CDS. The CDS he was charged for was marijuana, which has been legal in New Jersey since 2021. Following his release, Kadonsky founded Kids Against Covid-19 (KAC-19), a charity that provided food, blankets, and clothing to children in distress due to the pandemic. Today, the charity is known as KIDZ 2 the Rescue and continues to help children in distress.

Ronald McGraw, one of the 38 individuals who received a commutation in November 2025, shared his story of reformation while incarcerated during today’s announcement. McGraw served 23 years in prison following a conviction of conspiracy, murder, and unlawful weapon possession charges in 2006, though he was not the shooter in the case. While incarcerated, McGraw began to attend a Protestant church and quickly dedicated his life and purpose to religion, becoming a part of a prison church committee where he took an interest in counseling young people, eventually rising to be a Deacon in the church. He organized banquets, taught bible study classes, and wrote sermons. In January 2025, he began taking college classes through the [NJ-STEP program \(https://njstep.newark.rutgers.edu/\)](https://njstep.newark.rutgers.edu/). He maintained a job in food services while incarcerated and worked in the prison commissary at the time of his release in November 2025. Since his release, McGraw has secured stable employment and regularly preaches at his local church. He currently resides in Freehold, NJ.

“During my incarceration, I made a conscious decision not to be defined by my mistakes. I immediately began my journey toward redemption and gave my life to the Lord. Today, as a free man, I am blessed to be starting my first job this Friday,” **said Ronald McGraw**. “There are many men and women who are just as committed to the path of redemption—men and women who continue to pray and wait for deliverance. I humbly ask that the work of the Clemency Advisory Board continue, because it provides hope to those who feel hopeless. As the Word of God reminds us, hope springs eternal.”

For more information on Governor Murphy’s Clemency Initiative or to apply for Executive Clemency, please visit [www.nj.gov/clemency_](https://www.nj.gov/clemency/)(<https://www.nj.gov/clemency/>).

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