

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Appointment of Jayné Johnson as Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

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Governor Also Signs Sweeping Legislative Package to Bolster Diversity Within Law Enforcement

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 265 to create the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the Governor’s Office. This new internal office, led by Jayné Johnson, aims to dismantle inequity within State government based on race, ethnicity, and other protected characteristics and to expand opportunities for communities of color and other underserved New Jerseyans. The office will also be committed to fostering greater inclusion and understanding of issues of diversity, equity, and belonging.

Additionally, the Governor signed a legislative package to bring greater diversity to the ranks of law enforcement. The bills direct the Civil Service Commission to implement several programs to promote diversity in law enforcement. The programs include a mentorship program for law enforcement applicants as well as the creation of a statewide database to assist the Commission in understanding the reason for an applicant’s selection or disqualification during the hiring process.

“With today’s executive order and bill signings, we are building on our commitment to advance equity for New Jerseyans who have been left behind for far too long,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Jayné’s wealth of experience advocating for social justice and prior work crafting policy solutions that promote equity will serve her well in this role. I am proud to appoint her as the Director of this important new office and to sign a legislative package to ensure a stronger and fairer New Jersey that works for all.”

“During my career, I have had the honor of serving in different leadership roles to achieve equity to combat the long-standing problem of systemic racism and discrimination in our laws, economy, and institutions,” **said Jayné Johnson, incoming Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at the Governor’s office**. “My new position in the Governor’s Office will allow me to continue doing critical work to build a more equitable and inclusive future and I appreciate the Governor’s confidence in me and the opportunity to serve the people of New Jersey.”

Johnson brings extensive advocacy, public service, and policy experience to the Governor’s Office. She previously served as a senior policy analyst at The Council of State Governments Justice Center where she provided strategic direction in launching the federally supported Justice Reinvestment Initiative. During her time at the Council of State Governments Justice Center, she was selected to join the urgent work in Minnesota, focusing on addressing the inequities in the state’s probation system, including the lack of uniformity in local administration and the overrepresentation of Native Americans and Blacks in the system. She also previously served as Senior Counsel at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice where she championed workforce systems and housing reforms aimed at closing the racial wealth gap in New Jersey. Johnson received her Juris Doctor degree from Rutgers University Law School in Newark, New Jersey, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in international studies from Oakwood University.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the Governor’s Office will focus on:

- Overseeing training, coordinating programing, and developing policies to advance equity across all of state government;

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- Ensuring equity, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism considerations are integrated into all decision making across state government from specific policy matters to legislation;
- Establishing a statewide structure to ensure stakeholders and staff improve their ability to recognize and address structural inequities; and
- Working with the private sector to develop methods to ensure equity in their processes related to state engagements.

"Jayné is a true professional who is deeply respected by her colleagues," **said Megan Quattlebaum, Director of the Council of State Governments Justice Center.** "While at the CSG Justice Center, Jayné was able to bring diverse groups of stakeholders together for tough but important conversations. In Jayné, Governor Murphy is getting a dynamic leader who understands the moment and will make New Jersey a more inclusive state for everyone. We are proud and honored to have worked alongside her."

"The public health and economic crises of the past year and a half have laid bare the injustices that fall disproportionately on low-income residents, who are primarily Black and Brown people and women," **said Renee Koubiadis, Anti-Poverty Program Director of New Jersey Citizen Action.** "There is much that needs to be done to counteract the structural racism and systemic poverty that has grown over decades and centuries. The creation of the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging is an important step in addressing structural inequities across state government."

"Prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is necessary for New Jersey to advance racial justice and repair the harms of the past," **said Brandon McKoy, President of New Jersey Policy Perspective.** "Jayné Johnson is an incredible choice to spearhead these initiatives within the Murphy administration and brings an unparalleled depth of experience to the front office. Recognizing that personnel is policy, I commend Governor Murphy for this strong pick and look forward to seeing what Jayné accomplishes in her new role."

For a picture of Jayné Johnson, please click here

(<https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20210928/4e/98/c1/0b/8a322d2a33d7f5885fac22cc/JayneJohnsonHeadshot>).

Copy of Executive Order No. 265 (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-265.pdf>)

The Governor signed the following bills into law:

- **S-2765/A-4542 (Sweeney, Rice, Ruiz/Reynolds-Jackson, Johnson)** - Requires Civil Services Commission to undertake various initiatives to increase diversity and inclusivity within law enforcement agencies.
- **S-2766/A-4517 (Sweeney, Rice/Reynolds-Jackson, McKnight, Johnson)** - Requires Civil Service Commission establish mentoring program for certain civil service law enforcement applicants.
- **S-2767/A-4598 (Cryan, Rice, Sweeney, Ruiz/Reynolds-Jackson, Carter, Vainieri Huttie)** - Establishes database to aid in civil service hiring process for certain law enforcement officers; requires Statewide diversity analysis of law enforcement.

"We can bring more diversity to police forces and other law enforcement agencies by breaking down the barriers that make it much harder for minorities to join the ranks and to be treated fairly," **said Senate President Steve Sweeney.** "This will help applicants overcome some of the institutional obstacles and biases that minorities face at the same time we help make police departments better reflect the communities they serve. This is a matter of equal opportunity and social justice."

"If we are ever going to see our police forces and law enforcement truly reflect the diversity of our state, we must start by understanding their current make-up, collecting data, and tracking the progress so we can be more deliberative and intentional in our reforms," **said Senator Teresa Ruiz.** "Such provisions will lead to a more inclusive workforce at state and local law enforcement agencies. The more departments reflect the racial and ethnic make-up of the people they serve the better suited they will be to meet the needs of all communities."

"New Jersey is the most diverse state in the nation and we should have a police force that reflects the residents and communities they patrol," **said Senator Ronald Rice.** "As a former Newark police officer, I understand that diversity in our departments is crucial for building trust between the police and the people. This will help us build that diversity in departments that so many municipalities need."

"More diversity among law enforcement is a matter of equal opportunity and social justice, but it is also a means to

more effective law enforcement,” **said Senator Joseph Cryan, the former Union County Sheriff.** “It will help improve the working relationship between police departments and the communities they serve by preventing crime, working effectively with victims and teaming up with residents to keep their communities safe.”

“Decades of systemic racism, inequality, and mistrust of law by the black community enforcement was further exacerbated last year by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the public incidents of police brutality,” **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, who sponsors all three bills.** “Communities, while battling a historic public health crisis, gathered in protest after the public deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and reignited a call for justice and fair policing around the country. These three bills were introduced in the spirit of social justice and equality. Promoting diversity with a focus on mentoring and recruitment of women and minorities in law enforcement is an important step. It will help foster better relations between and all communities.”

“The mentoring program will assist law enforcement applicants, women and people of color, through the civil service application and selection process, and help address obstacles unique to their circumstances,” **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight.** “A more diverse cadre of police officers, that reflect all of the communities they serve, will be essential to repair the divide between communities and police. Through mentoring projects, and sharing information about civil service practices we can encourage and guide applicants, overcoming barriers to employment.”

“More diversity among law enforcement is a matter of equal opportunity and social justice, but it would also mean a more effective law enforcement,” **said Assemblyman Gordon Johnson.** “Laws such as this can bring more diversity to police forces and other law enforcement agencies by breaking down the barriers that are often institutional obstacles and biases that make it much harder for minorities to join the ranks and to be treated fairly. New Jersey is the most diverse state in the nation and we should have a police force that reflects the residents and communities they patrol.”

“The database will help ensure the Commission would have all relevant information from all candidates to better understand how new candidates are selected or not selected during the hiring process,” **said Assemblywoman Linda Carter.** “Keeping track of this process lets us see how we can bolster hiring of women and minorities to law enforcement positions. Diversity is the key to breaking the decades-long cycle of brutality, the lack of accountability, and cultural understanding of our communities by law enforcement.”

“Expanding diversity and inclusivity in law enforcement is crucial to ensuring equitable policing practices in our communities in the future,” **said Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle.** “Putting a system in place such as this database will help us track any progress being made to hire diverse candidates throughout the state.”

Governor Phil Murphy

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