



# do social justice.

NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

WWW.NJISJ.ORG @NJ\_ISJ

**CANDIDATE'S NAME:** Philip D. Murphy

**DATE:** June 1, 2017

Please return to Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg at [ewgreenberg@njisj.org](mailto:ewgreenberg@njisj.org) by June 1, 2017.

NOTE: The questions below are thoughtful and nuanced. They do not lend themselves to yes or no responses. For each question, I have provided a detailed response.

### ***Economic Mobility***

- Raise the Minimum Wage to \$15 an Hour in New Jersey. As one of the wealthiest states in the nation, with one of the highest costs of living, New Jersey should phase in an increase of the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, starting immediately by raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour. Research shows that raising the minimum wage to \$12 an hour nationally would not produce any net economic drawbacks, which is especially true in New Jersey given the many competitive economic advantages that our state has. Most importantly, raising the minimum wage will increase the ability of many individuals and families in the state to support themselves, lifting hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty, and reducing the gender and race pay gaps in the state.

### ***CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:***

From the start of my campaign, I have made clear that we must both grow our economy and make it fair again. As a central aspect of this fairness agenda, I support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. No one should be working full-time and still remain in poverty, and yet that is the reality for many workers and families in this state. As Governor, I will raise New Jersey's minimum wage from its current rate of \$8.44 to \$15 an hour and will work with the legislature to craft a schedule that accomplishes this increase as quickly and responsibly as possible. This will directly boost wages for almost a million New Jersey workers, many of whom are adults and parents working full-time.

Raising the minimum wage isn't just good for workers and families; it's also good for our businesses and our economy. Study after study show that increases in the minimum wage have had no negative effect on employment, even during economic downturns. New York and California have passed legislation raising the minimum wage to \$15 while New Jersey lags far behind. In fact, 20 states and Washington D.C. currently have higher minimum wages than New Jersey, including Republican stronghold states like Alaska, Arkansas, and South Dakota. We absolutely must and can do better.

- Pass Stackable Credential Legislation. Building on state laws like the New Jersey Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE) Act, New Jersey should adopt a law requiring that community colleges and workforce training providers receiving government funds exclusively provide stackable credentials—certifications or course credits that can lead to a more advanced certification or a degree—that would be accepted by certificate or associate degree programs in the same field. Stackable credentials are a critical tool for people to advance in their career field over time, particularly while working full-time. They are also usually portable among employers within the same industry, which promotes career mobility for residents. Additional funds should also be appropriated to provide technical assistance and support to colleges and training providers to implement this stackable credential requirement.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I am supportive of making it easier for credentials to be transferrable, so that community college and job training credentials can lead to more advanced certifications or degrees. I will work with our community colleges and employers to make sure this is done in the most effective way possible. I also believe that we need to make community college free, so that cost is not a barrier to any student. Stopping free public education at the 12th grade is simply not a recipe for success in the 21st century.

- Tax Credits and Funding for Apprenticeship Programs. New Jersey should allocate additional funding for apprenticeship programs in the state, which help directly bridge the middle skills gap between unemployed or under-employed people and employers. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that every federal dollar of investment in apprenticeship programs yields more than \$50 in federal revenue. Realizing a similar return on investment in New Jersey would mean that these programs will more than pay for themselves over time, as well as enable thousands of residents to enter career paths that pay a living wage and provide the opportunity for career advancement.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I believe that in addition to making college more affordable, we must also expand alternative pathways to success such as apprenticeship programs and vocational training. As the U.S. Ambassador to Germany, I witnessed first-hand the critical role apprenticeship and vocational training programs can play in an advanced economy. In fact, they are some of the smartest investments we can make, as they prepare workers for the demands of a modern economy. I am dismayed by the Trump administration's proposed cuts to job training programs at the federal level. Under my leadership, New Jersey will do the opposite and invest in our workforce.

- Strengthen the Opportunity to Compete Act. While the Opportunity to Compete Act was an important first step in improving access to employment for people with criminal convictions in New Jersey, it should be strengthened. The law should be amended to only permit employers to inquire about an applicant's criminal history and complete a background check after a conditional offer of employment is extended. Then, in order for the employer to rescind the conditional offer of employment, it should be required to provide a written explanation to the applicant of why the criminal history makes them ineligible for the

position, and provide the applicant an opportunity to respond. New Jersey should also examine and publicly report on the denial of employment based on criminal convictions across different racial and ethnic groups in the state. In addition to government enforcement of this law, there should be a private right of action to facilitate enforcement.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I believe we need to do a better job of making sure that people with criminal convictions have greater access to employment. New Jersey's "ban the box" law was a good first step, but more needs to be done. I will closely examine proposals to strengthen the law, and ensure that we do as much as we can to give those with criminal histories a fair chance in hiring while respecting the legitimate needs of employers.

- Repeal the Parking Offenses Adjudication Act. New Jersey should repeal the Parking Offenses Adjudication Act (POAA), a law that permits suspending a person's driver's license as a result of their inability to pay outstanding parking fines. Research has shown that conditioning one's access to a driver's license upon their ability to pay a fine, even in small installments, effectively denies the right to drive to low-income people and those living month-to-month. By taking away an individual's right to drive, this law hinders the ability of residents to work—license suspensions lead to job loss and diminished income. New Jersey should repeal the POAA in order to help people, particularly those in poverty, have full access to employment opportunities.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I will re-examine whether driver's license suspensions are an appropriate sanction for outstanding parking fines, as such suspensions make it harder for individuals to earn the money needed to pay off the fines. Other progressive states like Massachusetts are pursuing innovative policies that allow people who can't afford to pay fines to do community service instead of serving jail time. Under my leadership, New Jersey will pursue these types of policies.

***Criminal Justice Reform***

- Close Hayes and Jamesburg Youth Prisons. New Jersey must end the failed experiment of youth incarceration by closing Hayes and Jamesburg—the state's girls' youth prison and the largest youth prison for boys, respectively. Incredibly, two-thirds of kids incarcerated in New Jersey's youth prisons are Black, even though Black and white youth commit similar offenses at similar rates. New Jersey's system of incarceration is based on racialized policies that treat certain children as children, while forcing others—particularly children of color—into incarceration. Locking up our kids in large youth prisons harms them irreparably at a critical stage in their development and, as 80 percent of youth have a new court filing or are rearrested within a few years after release, perpetuates racial disparities. Though it fails to reduce recidivism or increase public safety, it nevertheless costs New Jersey taxpayers over \$200,000 per year to incarcerate each child.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

While New Jersey's youth incarceration rates have declined over the last few decades, there is much more to do. Unfortunately, the racial disparities that plague our criminal justice system start early. Black children are 24 times more likely than white children to be committed to a secure juvenile facility – the third highest disparity rate in the nation. This is unacceptable. I will pursue policies intended to reduce youth incarceration rates and decrease the need for youth prisons.

- Increase State Funding for Community-Based Youth Programs. New Jersey should re-invest funds from closing Hayes and Jamesburg youth prisons into developing and strengthening community-based intervention, prevention, diversion, and alternatives-to-incarceration programming for our youth. Community-based programming has been proven to increase public safety at a fraction of the cost of incarceration. For example, programming provided by organizations such as Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. successfully provides kids with intensive wrap-around services while decreasing recidivism rates—all at a cost of around \$75 a day per child. For those young people who may need to be placed in secure confinement for public safety reasons, they should be sent to small, treatment-centered facilities that are close to home and familial support.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

When it comes to juveniles, incarceration must be a last resort, and I will promote alternatives such as diversion programs. Depriving minors of their normal lives during their developmental years puts them at a severe disadvantage in life. I applaud the state Supreme Court's decision making it more difficult for juveniles to be sentenced to very long prison sentences, because no child should be considered irredeemable. And I have called for a sentencing commission to re-examine all our criminal sentencing laws, including those pertaining to juveniles.

- Strengthen and Codify the Attorney General's Stationhouse Adjustments Directive. New Jersey should strengthen and codify Attorney General Directive No. 2008-2, which establishes guidelines for law enforcement agencies' use of stationhouse adjustments. A stationhouse adjustment occurs when a young person who commits a first-time, low-level offense is diverted from having a formal complaint filed against him or her by fulfilling certain conditions—such as performing community service or attending a program such as Newark's Youth Court. Although the directive mandates that all law enforcement agencies with patrol jurisdiction must use stationhouse adjustments, the majority of agencies are not using this important process. To strengthen this policy, the Attorney General should issue a new directive including stronger enforcement protections and public access to data, and the legislature should then codify this order.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I am strongly supportive of policies like the referenced AG Directive that make it clear that we should be pursuing alternatives to incarceration for minors who commit low-level offenses, and will look at all options to ensure compliance with these policies. I will appoint an Attorney General who understands that justice isn't served when teenagers who make minor mistakes are forced to live the rest of their lives under a cloud of suspicion.

- Establish a Five-Year Police Residency Requirement. Law enforcement officials must see themselves as an integral part of the community, duty-bound to respect and honor the rights, dignity, and humanity of the people they serve. Police officers must seek to first build trust and community, and then join with the communities they serve to be both peacemakers and peacekeepers. Toward that end, New Jersey should pass legislation requiring that all newly-hired police officers live in the municipality they police for at least the first five years of their employment. Indeed, during a time when Newark—New Jersey’s largest city—is under a consent decree that requires widespread changes in the Newark Police Division’s practices, requiring police officers to be proximate to communities they protect as residents is foundational to those reforms.

*CANDIDATE’S RESPONSE:*

I support efforts to increase the diversity of our police forces. These efforts help law enforcement do its job more effectively. Those in law enforcement overwhelmingly chose this calling to help others, and I will work with them to consider residency requirements, keeping in mind both the need for police-community trust and the ability to recruit police officers. We must also continue efforts to improve communication between police and the communities they serve. In my former capacity as a National Board Member of the NAACP, I brokered the first meeting between the state PBA and the president of the State Chapter of the NAACP. There is more common ground than often meets the eye, and regular communication is essential to ensuring safe and prospering communities.

- Enforce and Pass Reentry Laws Focused on the Currently-Incarcerated. The legislature should evaluate current reentry laws to assess whether they are providing effective resources for incarcerated individuals. In particular, meaningful opportunities should be provided during incarceration for people to continue their education, receive treatment and services, strengthen technology literacy, and benefit from early notification of information that will impact them upon release—such as voting information and what fines and fees have been assessed against them. The Department of Corrections should also expand its workforce program to provide opportunities for individuals to develop unique skills to increase employment options upon release—for example, several states currently operate successful prison braille programs.

*CANDIDATE’S RESPONSE:*

More than 10,000 inmates are released each year in New Jersey. Nearly 70 percent will be re-arrested and roughly 40 percent will go back to prison, with many of the rearrests happening in the first year after release. These outcomes are in large part due to the failure to provide necessary support services to individuals while in prison, and upon release from custody. I will work with the Department of Corrections to expand services such as education, job training, and services, and I will partner with the non-profit and faith sectors to make sure that these crucial services continue after incarceration. I will also make it easier to expunge non-violent drug convictions, which often serve as barriers to obtaining housing or employment.

***Civic Engagement***

- Establish Automatic Voter Registration. New Jersey should pass automatic voter registration (AVR), a reform that would modernize the state's election system and dramatically increase the number of citizens who participate in our elections. Under AVR, eligible citizens who interact with participating government agencies—like the Motor Vehicle Commission—are automatically registered to vote unless they opt-out. The individual's information is electronically transmitted from the agency to election officials, which reduces the need for paper forms and improves record-keeping. In addition to registering new voters, AVR ensures that voters' registration records are kept up-to-date if they move within the state, both protecting the franchise and helping to maintain accurate voter rolls.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. We must do all we can to expand access to voting. I come to these issues not only as a candidate for governor, but also as a former board member of the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights organization and a champion of voting rights. I have publicly supported not only automatic voter registration at the MVC, but also same-day voter registration and online voter registration.

- Restore Voting Rights to People with Criminal Convictions. New Jersey should restore the right to vote to the over 94,000 people currently disfranchised because of a criminal conviction. Currently, a person convicted of a felony must complete all terms of their sentence—including parole and probation—before their voting rights are restored. Three-quarters of those disfranchised, over 70,000 people, are living in our communities, raising families, and paying taxes. Laws that disfranchise people with a criminal conviction also disproportionately impact communities of color due to racial discrimination in the criminal justice system. As New Jersey continues its public dialogue around criminal justice reform, it is important that those most deeply impacted by the criminal justice system are able to make their voices heard.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I believe that once individuals are released from prison, their voting rights should be restored. I have considered this issue not only as a candidate for governor, but also in my former capacity as New Jersey's only representative on the national operating board of the NAACP. We need to do everything possible to help formerly incarcerated individuals transition back into society, and that begins with reintegrating them into our democracy. A number of other states, from Massachusetts to Utah, have taken this common-sense step, and we should join them.

- Designate State Corrections Agencies as Voter Registration Agencies. New Jersey should designate its state corrections agencies, such as the Department of Corrections, State Parole Board, and probation offices, as voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). For over 20 years, the NVRA has required state public assistance agencies and departments of motor vehicles to provide voter registration services to their clients and customers. New Jersey's corrections agencies should perform a similar service. As designated voter registration agencies, they would be required to notify each person when their rights have been restored, provide the person with a voter registration

application, and provide assistance in completing the form and transmitting it to election officials. Designation will not only ensure that people are aware that their rights have been restored, it will provide them with the tools to exercise their right to vote.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I support making it easier to register to vote, and that includes designating additional state agencies as voter registration agencies. As mentioned above, I also support automatic voter registration at the MVC, online voter registration, and same-day voter registration.

- Set Minimum Early Voting Requirements. New Jersey should expand the opportunities for early voting by establishing in-person polling sites in each county that open at least two weeks prior to Election Day, with multiple locations in each county. These sites should be required to offer some early voting hours during evenings and weekends, including the weekend immediately before Election Day. As early voting is only effective if voters are aware of it, the legislation should also include a public education requirement. Research shows that early voting improves participation and results in shorter lines on Election Day, as well as allowing for early diagnosis and correction of any errors with registration rolls, ballots, or machinery. Beyond these benefits, early voting is particularly helpful to voters of color, who are more likely to take advantage of the flexibility early voting affords. Enacting a robust early voting law is an essential step toward making New Jersey's elections accessible to all citizens.

*CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE:*

I support in-person early voting and would strongly consider expanded vote by mail programs, as we should be making it easier for people to participate in our democracy, not harder. Governor Christie has repeatedly vetoed legislation that would allow early voting; I will do exactly the opposite and sign these bills into law.