



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EQUITY

Office Newsletter
March/April 2024

CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. PAYNE, JR. (1958 - 2024)

- Congressman Donald Payne, Jr. passed away on Wednesday, April 24th, after serving as the U.S. Representative for New Jersey's 10th Congressional District since 2012.
- Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 357, ordering the flag of the United States of America and the flag of New Jersey to fly at half-staff from Wednesday, May 1, 2024, through Thursday, May 2, 2024, in recognition and mourning of the dedicated legislator and public servant, Representative Donald M. Payne, Jr.
- Congressman Payne, Jr. will lie in state at the Essex County Historic Court House in Newark, New Jersey on Wednesday, May 1st. A public viewing will take place from noon until midnight.
- A funeral Mass will take place at Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, New Jersey at 10 AM on Thursday, May 2nd.



GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS MONUMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEGISLATION



- Governor Murphy signed historic legislation to make housing more affordable and more accessible for working families all across New Jersey.
- Here's a snapshot of the enacted bills resulting from the work of legislators, advocates -- like Fair Share Housing Center, and stakeholders.
- **A-4/S-50** - Abolishes the Council on Affordable Housing and establishes a process for municipalities to determine their own present and prospective fair share affordable housing obligations based on the formulas provided in the bill. Requires calculations to be submitted by November 15, 2024. Appropriates \$16 million to the project. (P.L. 2024, c.2.)
- **A-3337/S-2312** - Allows projects supported by the State or municipal affordable housing trust fund to contribute to municipal services by making "payments in lieu of taxation" (PILOT). (P.L.2024, c.6.)

- **A-2267/S-1415** - Requires the New Jersey Housing Mortgage and Finance Agency (HMFA) to establish a pilot program to support insurance premiums for eligible affordable housing projects constructed by for-profit affordable housing developers (P.L.2024, c.4).
- **A-2296/S-2309** - Permits a municipality to authorize the municipal clerk to submit certain written statements concerning affordable housing units, limits certain HMFA powers. (P.L.2024, c.5.)
- **A-1495/S-1484** - Exempts receipts from sales made to contractors or repairpersons of materials, supplies, or services related to the construction of 100%-affordable housing projects in order to help reduce the costs for constructing such projects. (P.L.2024, c.3).
- **A-3365/S-1422** - Allows allows taxpayers to accelerate the depreciation of eligible property expenditures in connection with construction of new affordable housing developments in order to realize cost saving (P.L. 2024, c.1.)





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INAUGURAL AI SUMMIT

On Thursday, April 11th, the Murphy Administration and Princeton University hosted the inaugural Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit. The AI Summit convened subject matter experts, industry leaders, policy makers, researchers, and entrepreneurs from across the country and the globe. Princeton Alum Brad Smith, Vice-Chair and President of Microsoft Corporation, gave the keynote address, observing that New Jersey was poised to lead the next phase of AI innovation guided by a moral compass.

The AI Summit continued collaboration that began in the fall of 2023 when the Murphy Administration and Princeton University launched the New Jersey AI Hub. The New Jersey Economic Development Authority recently announced a Request for Information (RFI) to gather best practices and operational insights that will help to advance the work of the NJ AI Hub. Responses are due by May 31st.

NEW JERSEY MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INNOVATION AUTHORITY

On Wednesday, March 27th, Governor Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy attended the inaugural board meeting of the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJMIHA) which is tasked with overseeing the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Center based in Trenton, continuing the work of Nurture NJ to reduce the maternal and infant mortality epidemic in New Jersey, and ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities.

The Authority is governed by a 15-member Board which appointed Lisa Asare as the President and Chief Executive Officer of NJMIHA.

Lisa Asare has been in public service for the past two decades, holding various positions within the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services. Asare was most recently the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, overseeing the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and leading the departments' work with the Nurture NJ initiative.



NEW JERSEY-INDIA COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On Thursday, April 18th, Governor Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way announced Rajpal (Raj) Bath as the Inaugural Executive Director of the New Jersey-India Commission. Prior to this role, Raj Bath was a Senior Aide to Governor Murphy. Governor Murphy established the Commission in February 2024 through Executive Order No. 354 to advance bilateral trade, investment, and economic development between New Jersey and India. The Commission also aims to promote cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries to create a partnership that will lead to sustainable, long-term economic growth.





GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

“Leading the way to a clean energy future in New Jersey” - Governor Murphy

- On Earth Day, President Biden announced that New Jersey will receive \$156 million in solar power federal grants.
- On Friday, April 26th Governor Murphy visited Eagles I & II community solar projects in Bayville, announcing major investments in clean energy.

New Jersey weathered two significant events in April:

- April 5th: The New Jersey Earthquake - registered 4.8 in magnitude.
 - The largest in the region since 1973, with at least 51 aftershocks in the days and weeks that followed
 - Scientists suspect that the earthquake likely originated in the area of the Ramapo fault zone in the Newark basin.
- April 8: Total solar eclipse
 - The next one can be viewed in Spain in 2026.



AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **DEP:** “New Jersey Interagency Council on Climate Resilience Releases Draft Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan, Launches Updated Heat Hub NJ” ([read more](#))
- **DOBI:** “New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance Alerts Student Loan Borrowers About Loan Forgiveness Programs” ([read more](#))
- **DOH:** “NJ Health Department Report Shows Continued Increases in Childhood Lead Exposure Screenings” ([read more](#)) ([Spanish](#))
- **DCA:** “DCA Announces More Than \$34 Million in Resilient Communities Program Grant Awards” ([read more](#)) ([Spanish](#))
- “Attorney General Platkin and Division on Civil Rights Announce New Initiative to Combat Bias and Hate in New Jersey” ([read more](#))





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March, April, and May Holidays

March

Women's History Month
Irish-American Heritage Month

- March 8th - International Women's Day
- March 10th - Ramadan Begins
- March 17th - St. Patrick's Day
- March 24th - Purim
- March 25th - Holi
- March 29th - Good Friday
- March 31st - Easter Sunday
- March 31st - Trans Day of Visibility

April

Arab American Heritage Month
National Minority Health Month
Fair Housing Month
Diversity Month
Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month

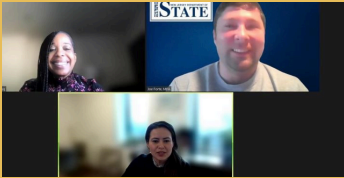
- April 1st - April Fools Day
- April 9th - Eid-al Fitr
- April 13th - Vaisakhi
- April 16th - Rama Navami
- April 22nd - Earth Day
- April 25th - Bring Your Child to Work Day
- April 23rd to 30th - Passover

May

Asian American and Pacific Islander Month
Jewish-American Heritage Month
Military Appreciation Month

- May 5th - Cinco de Mayo
- May 5th - Orthodox Easter
- May 5-6th - Yom Hashoah
- May 12th - Mother Day
- May 18th - National Armed Forces Day
- May 27th - Memorial Day

Women's History Month Event Highlights



Women's History Month was celebrated across state government, including the panel discussion held by the New Jersey Department of Treasury focused on well-being and health and the convening of the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and other Partners hosted by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families on International Women's Day.



Our office was honored to join a virtual event hosted by Deputy Chief of Staff Joe Forte and the team at the New Jersey Department of State and to join Kimberly Cahill, Patricia Matos, Abbie Tang-Smith, and Natasha Hemmings on a panel hosted by Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Monise Princilus and the team at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. PAYNE, JR. (1958 - 2024)

"It was my great honor to work side-by-side with Donald to build a stronger and fairer New Jersey, and we will hold his memory close to our hearts as we build upon the Payne family's deep legacy of service in advocating for the communities they served so dearly.

Donald's love will live on in the homes of his neighbors in Newark, who now have access to safe drinking water, and in the good-paying jobs he helped create for his brothers and sisters in labor. And it will live on in his wife Beatrice, and their three children, Donald III, Jack, and Yvonne, who were the pride of his life. Our heartfelt prayers are with his family during this difficult time." - Governor Phil Murphy

[See Governor Murphy's Full Statement](#)



Jayné J. Johnson,
Director of the
Office of Equity

Thank you for connecting with the NJ Office of Equity! We appreciate your interest in learning more about our work.

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Many thanks to Laura Esteban, Awn Rizvi, Mel Walker, and Natasha Camhi for their contributions to this issue!