



# GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EQUITY

OFFICE NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

## GOVERNOR MURPHY ANNOUNCES CLEMENCY FOR 36 INDIVIDUALS INCLUDING 33 PARDONS AND THREE COMMUTATIONS



Gov. Murphy, DOC Commissioner Victoria Kuhn, and the children of Dawn Jackson, who was granted a commutation.



Gov. Murphy, Commissioner Kuhn, Clemency Advisory Board Chair Justin Dews, Governor's Office staff, and NJ ACLU leadership.

***"TODAY, WE REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO ENSURING THAT NEW JERSEY IS THE STATE FOR SECOND CHANCES." - GOVERNOR MURPHY***

***"WHILE WE CELEBRATE TODAY, OUR JOB IS NOT FINISHED. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING OUR WORK AND SEEING FUTURE CLEMENCY RECIPIENTS ENJOY THE RESTORATION OF THEIR FULL CITIZENSHIP AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES."***

***- JUSTIN DEWS, CHAIR OF THE CLEMENCY ADVISORY BOARD***

On December 16, 2024, Governor Murphy granted clemency to 36 individuals, including 33 pardons and three commutations.

On Juneteenth 2024, Governor Murphy announced a historic clemency initiative through Executive Order No. 362 that established a Clemency Advisory Board to review applications for pardons and commutations and expedited review for individuals who committed certain non-violent crimes or who are victims of domestic or sexual violence or sex trafficking. This first group of pardon recipients includes veterans of the U.S. military, faith leaders, small business owners, and people who work or volunteer in settings where they provide support for individuals with substance use disorders or with criminal histories. All pardon recipients have been free from criminal justice system involvement for more than 10 years. Read more [here](#).

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS THE FREEDOM TO READ ACT
- THE NEW JERSEY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASED
- OFFICE HOLIDAY CHAT & CHEW AND TRENTON AREA TOY AND CLOTHING DRIVE





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### GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS THE FREEDOM TO READ ACT



FREEDOM TO READ ACT - A3446/S2421

**Primary sponsors:**

Senator Andrew Zwicker, Senate  
Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz, Assemblywoman  
Mitchelle Drulis, Assemblywoman  
Shavonda E. Sumter,  
and Assemblyman Herb Conaway Jr.

Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the Freedom to Read Act, A3446/S2421, which protects intellectual freedom at New Jersey schools and libraries and prevents arbitrary book banning. The act ensures the rights of students, parents, and communities to have free access to age-appropriate books and learning materials at schools and public libraries.

Under the act, boards of education and governing boards of public libraries are prohibited from removing books or censoring materials based on viewpoint, idea, concept, or offensive content unless the removal is to restrict developmentally inappropriate materials from certain age groups.

### THE NEW JERSEY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASE

The State of New Jersey Artificial Intelligence Task Force published its report to Governor Murphy outlining actions the Garden State can take to encourage the ethical and effective use of emerging technologies.

The report recommends actions that aim to create economic opportunities for residents and businesses, encourage ethical use of AI technologies, promote equitable outcomes, improve government services and resident experiences, and support public and private workforces.

The report features free AI skills training developed for the state by InnovateUS, findings from the task force including the Equity and Literacy Working Group, as well as the results from a nation-leading effort to survey New Jersey's residents, workforce, institutions, and businesses on their views on AI technologies.



[See the full report](#)





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### 2024 NURTURE NJ LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



On December 9, 2024, the Office of the First Lady hosted its seventh annual Nurture NJ Leadership Summit. This year's theme was "Strengthening and Diversifying the Perinatal Workforce," bringing together experts from across the state and country to discuss and identify solutions to NJ's maternal and infant health crisis and the unacceptable disparities that persist. The summit included over 700 national experts, doulas, hospital CEOs and health care providers, elected officials, activists, representatives from state departments and agencies, nonprofit leaders, parents, and more. The summit featured remarks by First Lady Tammy Murphy and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, along with breakout discussions and panels ([read more](#)).

#### AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **BPU:** Energy Storage Incentive Program Straw Proposal Released ([read more](#)).
- **DCA:** Murphy Administration Announces \$6 Million for Next Round of Shared Services Grant Funding ([read more](#)).
- **DHS:** 988 is the three-digit dialing code for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline ([read more/Video](#)).
- **DOT:** Murphy Administration Awards \$2 Million in FY25 Transportation Accessibility and Mobility Pilot Program (TAMP) Grants ([read more](#)).
- **EDA:** The NJEDA approved tax credits under the Aspire Program for the Netflix Studio at Fort Monmouth. The state-of-the-art campus will be Netflix's flagship studio on the East Coast ([read more](#)).
- **OAG:** AG Platkin Announces New Office in Department of Law & Public Safety to Promote Excellence in Policing ([read more](#)).

#### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- **P.L.2024, c.89:** establishes requirements concerning the development of personalized postpartum care, pregnancy loss, and stillbirth information.
- **Freedom to Read Act:** affirms DOE's commitment to empowering students with access to diverse ideas, knowledge, & perspectives.
- **P.L.2024, c.91:** Requires transparency concerning compensation with promotional opportunities and in employment listings.
- **P.L.2024, c.95:** makes outdoor dining permissions permanent for restaurants and certain alcoholic beverage retailers and manufacturers.
- **P.L.2024, c.100:** Provides grant to study and map mental health care resources for children; makes appropriation.







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### HOLIDAY CHAT & CHEW AND TOY/CLOTHING DRIVE FOR TRENTON AREA FAMILIES



The Governor's Office Employee Resource Groups held a Holiday Chat & Chew and conducted a Toy/Clothing Drive to support families served by the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Thank you to all our participants for making this event a success!

### Holidays and Observances

#### November

##### Native-American Heritage Month

**November 1:** Diwali

**November 5:** Election Day

**November 11:** Veterans Day

**November 20:** Transgender Day of Remembrance

**November 24:** Native American Heritage Day

**November 28:** Thanksgiving

#### December

**December 1:** Rosa Parks Day

**December 13:** National Ice Cream Day

**December 16 - 24:** Las Posadas

**December 21:** Winter Solstice

**December 24:** Christmas Eve

**December 25:** Christmas Day

**December 25 - January 2:** Hanukkah

**December 2 - January 1:** Kwanzaa

**December 31:** New Year's Eve

#### January

**January 1:** New Year's Day

**January 6:** Three Kings Day

**January 20:** Martin L. King Jr. Day

**January 20:** Inauguration Day

**January 23:** Maternal Health Awareness Day

**January 27:** International Holocaust Remembrance Day

**January 29:** Lunar New Year



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.

If you are not receiving this email directly from us and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please click [here](#).

Many thanks to Christofer Robles and Awn Rizvi for their contributions to this issue!

