

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 297**

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2022, 21 people, including 19 children and two teachers, were killed, and several other children were injured, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas in a horrific act of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, reports indicate that the gunman was heavily armed with an AR-15 style rifle and high-capacity magazines; and

WHEREAS, preliminary reports indicate that the gunman legally purchased two AR-15 style rifles in the days after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

WHEREAS, the mass shooting in Uvalde is the deadliest such incident at a U.S. school since the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre; and

WHEREAS, as in the Sandy Hook massacre, parents and other family members were forced to wait in agony to learn whether their children had lived or died, an experience that no human being should have to bear; and

WHEREAS, the occurrence of any mass shooting at a school, which should be a sanctuary, represents a failure of our nation to protect our children; and

WHEREAS, a mass shooting is generally defined as an incident in which at least four people are shot, and by this standard there have been 213 mass shootings in the United States this year as of May 25, 2022 - more than the number of days so far this year; and

WHEREAS, our nation's response to this tragedy, and to all such acts of senseless violence, must consist of more than thoughts and prayers; and

WHEREAS, my Administration has directed law enforcement to increase their presence at New Jersey schools to make sure our students, parents, and educators feel safe; and

WHEREAS, we must continue to make every effort to ensure that those who seek to do irreparable harm cannot access firearms and weapons of war; and

WHEREAS, this Administration is committed, not only to mourning the victims and their families, but also to doing everything we can both to prevent these senseless and heartbreaking mass shootings from happening in our State and to end the epidemic of gun violence that plagues far too many of our communities; and

WHEREAS, in honor and remembrance of the victims of this horrific tragedy, President Biden has ordered that all U.S. flags be flown at half-staff at all public buildings and grounds until sunset on May 28, 2022;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PHILIP D. MURPHY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The flag of the United States of America and the flag of New Jersey shall be flown at half-staff at all State departments, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities until sunset on Saturday, May 28, 2022, in recognition and mourning of the passing of the victims in Uvalde, Texas.

2. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this  
25<sup>th</sup> day of May,  
Two Thousand and Twenty-two,  
and of the Independence of  
the United States, the Two  
Hundred and Forty-Sixth.

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor