

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 413**

WHEREAS, Governor Richard James ("Dick") Codey - New Jersey's longest serving State legislator - was born on November 27, 1946, in Orange, New Jersey to Patricia (née Harling) and Donald Codey; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey grew up in Orange, New Jersey, in an apartment above his father's mortuary business with his four siblings; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey earned a bachelor's degree in education from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1981; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey briefly worked as a teacher before taking over the family funeral business, which he grew to two homes, and was president of an insurance company; and

WHEREAS, when he was only 27 years old, Governor Codey was elected to the State Assembly representing the 26<sup>th</sup> District and served as an assemblyman from 1974 to 1982; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Governor Codey was elected to the State Senate representing the 27<sup>th</sup> District, rising through the ranks and eventually becoming Senate President in January 2002; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Senate President from 2002 through 2010, Governor Codey served as acting governor following Governor Christine Todd Whitman's resignation in 2001 to become head of the U.S. Environment Protection Agency, serving in that capacity for three days from January 12, 2002, to January 15, 2002; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey would often joke about that term and say "During my tenure as governor, there were no scandals or tax increases"; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey became acting governor for the second time upon the resignation of Governor Jim McGreevey in November

2004 through the remainder of McGreevey's unexpired term in January 2006; and

WHEREAS, as acting governor, Codey's first official act in office was the issuance of Executive Order No. 1 (2004), creating the Governor's Task Force on Mental Health to undertake a comprehensive review of the State's mental health system and to make recommendations concerning needed changes to improve the delivery of and access to mental health services, eventually leading to the establishment of the Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey's other notable accomplishments included signing the Smoke-Free Air Act banning smoking in indoor public areas like restaurants, theaters, malls, and other public buildings; implementing new rules to revise the school nutrition guidelines to ban junk food and soda from school lunches; appointing the State's first inspector general; brokering the deal to keep the NFL's Giants and Jets at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford; and signing the nation's first legislative moratorium on executions; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2006, Codey officially became the 53<sup>rd</sup> Governor of the State of New Jersey upon the enactment of legislation providing that a person who serves as acting governor for a continuous period of at least 180 days be designated "Governor of the State of New Jersey" for official and historical purposes; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey chose not to run for a full term as Governor and was re-elected to the State Senate in 2007, serving continuously in that role from 1982 until his retirement in January 2024; and

WHEREAS, during his 42 years as a member of the Senate, Governor Codey served on the Legislative Services Commission and as chairman of the Senate Health Committee, where he fiercely championed housing affordability, gun safety, funding for stem cell research, maternal health, and public and mental health issues, at times going undercover to sleep at homeless shelters or to work as an orderly at Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital in order to better advocate for reform; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Governor Codey published his memoir, "Me, Governor? My Life in the Rough-and-Tumble World of New Jersey Politics"; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Governor Codey and his wife established The Codey Fund for Mental Health, a nonprofit organization aimed at increasing health care accessibility and resources for a broad range of mental illnesses, including post-partum depression, a cause which is deeply personal to the Codeys; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his commitment to public service, in September 2005, Essex County renamed the South Mountain Arena ice rink the "Richard J. Codey Arena" and in May 2025, the New Jersey State House visitor's center was renamed the "Governor Richard J. Codey Welcome Center"; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career in state government, Governor Codey was a beloved and involved member of his community who coached youth basketball and mentored first-generation college students; and

WHEREAS, Governor Codey passed away on January 11, 2026, at the age of 79, at his home in Roseland, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of more than forty years, Mary Jo (née Rolli) Codey; their sons Kevin and Christopher; and their grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to honor the life, service, contributions, and legacy of Governor Codey, and to mark his passing;

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 during appropriate hours from Thursday, January 22, 2026, until sunset on Saturday, January 24, 2026, in recognition and mourning of public servant and the longest-serving member in the history of the New Jersey Legislature, Governor Dick Codey.

2. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this  
15<sup>th</sup> day of January,  
Two Thousand and Twenty-Six,  
and of the Independence of  
the United States, the Two  
Hundred and Fiftieth.

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Kate E. McDonnell

Chief Counsel to the Governor