“We’re from Jersey, Baby!” Governor Murphy Delivers the 2025 State of the State Address

Jan 15, 2025

Categories:

Gibbons
State Government

Authors:

Courtney A. Johnson
Alexandra C. Hayes

Yesterday afternoon, Governor Phil Murphy delivered his seventh State of the State address at a joint session of the New Jersey Legislature. This address re-invoked the “stronger and fairer” New Jersey theme that marked Governor Murphy’s first term, imbued with the subtext of innovation.

During the address, the Governor looked back at some of the events that have occurred while he has been in office, including a global pandemic, record high inflation, and the outbreak of two international conflicts. He also highlighted the State’s accomplishments as the “medicine chest to the world,” its growing entertainment and film industry, and its winning bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup Final.

In all, Governor Murphy presented a broad scope of issues his administration seeks to work on during his final year in office. Those priorities include affordability and economic opportunity; childcare and education; healthcare and reproductive rights; transportation and infrastructure; the environment; the protection of fundamental rights; and criminal justice reform.

Affordability and Economic Opportunity

The Governor acknowledged the rising cost of living and efforts to make New Jersey more affordable. He highlighted programs such as ANCHOR (geared toward property tax relief) and RetireReady NJ (a publicly run retirement savings program), as well as a higher minimum wage rate that has nearly doubled since he took office and New Jersey’s fast growing population and job sector growth.

Over the next year, the Governor will seek to accelerate New Jersey’s economic growth rate by increasing the number of unionized jobs, particularly in the emerging industries of artificial intelligence (AI), renewable energy, and the “economies of tomorrow.” He will also seek to remedy the exclusion that has

2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. All rights reserved. ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

prevented historically underrepresented groups from generational wealth, as demonstrated by the comprehensive Statewide Disparity Study that was published last January, which found that minority-owned, women-owned, and other small businesses have been disproportionately excluded from public contracting opportunities. Lastly, the Governor called to reform the State's zoning and permitting laws to help expedite the construction of thousands of affordable housing units over the next decade.

Childcare and Education

Governor Murphy referred to parental leave as a right that every New Jersey worker should be entitled to and announced a new paid parental leave policy for those who work in the State's public sector government roles. He linked the parental leave policy to First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ Initiative.

The Governor also highlighted New Jersey's top-ranking public education system and announced a suite of new proposals, including plans to ban cellphones from K-12 classrooms, expand on universal Pre-K, and enact mandatory full-day kindergarten programs to help working parents.

Healthcare and Reproductive Rights

Governor Murphy lauded New Jersey's efforts to protect access to essential healthcare services and provide medical debt relief. He also called for continuing the State's commitment to the provision of healthcare services from mammograms to ultrasounds for all women. The Governor spoke about securing the State's reputation as a safe haven for reproductive freedom, announcing that New Jersey will begin to stockpile Mifepristone and ensure New Jerseyans have access to medical abortion, and getting rid of the out-of-pocket costs associated with abortion procedures.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The Governor highlighted his administration's efforts to combat "congestion pricing" and protect New Jersey commuters traveling into New York City, as well as the investments made in New Jersey Transit and the billions in secured federal funding for the Hudson River Tunnel Project. This year, the Murphy Administration will focus

2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. All rights reserved. ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

on overhauling dangerous intersections and improving safety for all road users, specifically bicyclists and pedestrians, throughout the State. Lastly, the Governor asked the Legislature to send him a proposal that will provide New Jerseyans with mobile access to their driver's licenses.

Environment

Governor Murphy noted the need to protect the environment and address climate change, linking the recent wildfires in New Jersey and southern California to the need to act. He highlighted the State's goal to run New Jersey on 100 percent clean energy by 2035 and his desire to codify the clean energy standard into law.

Protection of Fundamental Rights

In addition to advocating for continued access to reproductive healthcare, the Governor discussed voting rights, criminal justice reform, and state and federal relations. Looking to the future, the Governor expressed his administration's intentions to work in concert with the Trump Administration. He noted, however, that where the incoming federal administration's priorities do not align with New Jersey values, he will fight to protect all New Jerseyans. During his final year in office, the Murphy Administration will seek further changes to the voting laws, including establishing same-day voter registration and allowing 16- and 17-year old residents to vote in local school board elections.

Criminal Justice Reforms

The Governor called for restoring trust in the criminal justice system. One proposal he seeks to have enacted is the elimination of technical parole violations, which result in detention and imprisonment of individuals. These violations would include missing a scheduled meeting with a parole officer or failing to report a move to a new town.

© 2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. May be considered attorney advertising in some jurisdictions.

2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. All rights reserved. ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

FBT Gibbons