



8th Edition INSIDER 100

RISING GENERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION — *by John Van Vliet*

Readers of Insider NJ are welcomed to the Rising Generations publication in its 8th edition, which recognizes and celebrates the younger, aspiring movers and shakers in their communities, be they local, county, or state. Some names found herein are familiar, while others may be new to Insider NJ’s audience. All, however, are people whose efforts are building the future of the Garden State. While this publication focuses on Millennials, Generation Z, and the upcoming Generation Alpha, it is important to note that society, which is already polarized, would not be well served by being divided too strictly along generational labels. Nevertheless, generational identity has become an increasingly powerful element in 21st Century society.

Let’s take a brief look at some of our forebearers’ titles, then. The first of the “canonically-named” generations is the “Lost Generation,” or those who were born roughly a century before today’s Millennials. This generation came of age in the early twentieth century and were swept up in the maelstrom of the First World War, trauma-partied hard in the 1920s amid Prohibition, just to slam

into the Great Depression and Second World War as they grew older. The Lost Generation did not enjoy the full bounty of economic progress that their children and grandchildren would, on the whole.

The next generation, generally, were the ones to serve in the Second World War and thereafter shape the postwar period which brought the United States into superpower status. Fort Lee, NJ-born General James Van Fleet, a WWI, WWII, and Korean War veteran, was said to have called that generation “the Greatest Generation the country had produced.” The name stuck, echoed by Tom Brokaw in his 1998 book of the same title. They grew up knowing childhood hardship in the Depression, only to be thrown into the largest and bloodiest conflict in human history, where the fate of the world hung in the balance. They rose, met the challenge, and built a country, racing against the Soviet Union, that would eventually land the Silent Generation’s Neil Armstrong on the moon in 1969. Back on Earth, American towns and cities seethed with righteous unrest during the Civil Rights Movement.

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Following the Greatest Generation, were the Silent Generation, sometimes also known as the Builder Generation, those born 1928-1945. Former President Joe Biden falls into this generation, the ones who grew up and enjoyed America's unrivaled economic, political, and military dominance in the postwar order while the Baby Boomers were learning to walk. It was a time of emerging global institutions—the United Nations, World Health Organization, NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community, and, at home, the growing Civil Rights Movement. Postwar decolonization was in full swing in Africa, with new nations, new flags, new maps, and new conflicts produced. European imperial control was in unstoppable recession, definitively dead with the Suez Crisis, and American-Soviet rivalry reshaped the globe. This generation was finding America's place of leadership in the world, faced with the threat of the Communist Bloc, led by the Kremlin of the murderous paranoia of Stalin, the deceptively crude guile of Khrushchev, and the moribund repression of Brezhnev. As Uncle Sam and the Bear dangerously danced around Asia, Baby Boomers who went to school amid Cuban Missile Crisis air raid drills were drafted into the Vietnam War, one of the most controversial American conflicts in the postwar period.

In the shadow of the Cold War, both the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and Generation X (1965-1980) grew up. The hippies and slackers, respectively, have since

traded tie-dye for suits-and-ties, and stuffed their IRAs and 401(k)s. They are, by and large, blamed by their successors for having busted the unions and New Deal-flavored worker protections their own parents and grandparents fought for that they might advance shareholder value. They watched their home values balloon far out of reach for most of their children. Boomers and aspiring Gen Xers—the “latchkey generation” which prides itself on its independence and education—were better able to ride out the worst of the 2008 Great Recession than hamstrung their Millennial kids, who were heavily saddled with student debt unlike any previous generation. The Millennials, who still optimistically searched for a step on the well-worn rungs of the Ladder To Success—a ladder that was now trembling underfoot—swept Barack Obama into office on the promise of hope and change. But those promises were not felt after two terms and Millennials were far less enthusiastic about Obama's former rival and Secretary of State, First Lady Hillary Clinton. Millennial buzz had fizzled, electorally. For Millennials, reaching the lofty American Dream suddenly seemed like a dizzying ascent with major life milestones slipping farther and farther away—but what could be done? Six years ago, as of this writing, “The Washington Post”

described Millennials as “the unluckiest generation” comparing their economic strength and mobility to previous American generations, including the Lost Generation. But Generation Z, now fully of-age, has been glued to their smartphones, watching entry-level jobs evaporating along with their surety in their sense of purpose, with digital reality itself being vacuumed up by AI to fuel the ambitions of tech oligarchs headed toward trillionaire status. To Millennials and their oft-invoked “existential dread,” Gen Z has replied with, “hold my beer” threatening widespread Nihilism among the youth in the face of unchecked greed.

In short, the kids aren't alright. Promises made have not been fulfilled. The extreme concentration of wealth has crushed the middle class into a pancake for younger Americans. The dream of owning a home is an increasingly distant one. It should be no surprise, then, that this sense of worry has been capitalized on. More than ever, gambling apps, casino websites, and the so-called “prediction market” (just a fin-bro term for gambling) has been pushed into every advertising space possible. Youth gambling addiction is, according to an ABC News report citing the Journal of Behavioral Addictions, a rising problem. Where 1% of adults

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report a gambling addiction, for youths, the number is as high as 7%. A combination of juvenile impulsiveness with a sense of escaping the ever-narrowing rat race through gamified chance, is potentially making Gen Z and Gen Alpha fiscally and psychologically handicapped.

An increase in religiosity, particularly Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, has been noted among Generation Z compared to previous generations.

The roots of this have to be examined, but the craving for structure and certainty in an uncertain world that seems to consistently deliver for the few at the expense of the many cannot be ruled out. Unleashing his first encyclical as pope, however, the Baby Boomer pontiff, Leo XIV, has come out against the moral, political, and economic abuses and degradations posed by Artificial Intelligence. AI, he warns, threatens to undermine our access to objective truth, reliability, and concentrate enormous amounts of the aforementioned economic, political, and moral power in the hands of a few Silicon Valley oligarchs. As bubble-dwelling tech bros gush gleefully about mass layoffs and eliminating entry-level white collar jobs as fast as possible, at least Gen Z has a Chicago-born champion in the

Vatican reminding powerful lever-pullers of industry that human value is innate, not determined by how “productive” they are. It was a timely message, as Standard Chartered bank CEO Bill Winters casually spoke of automating away “low-value human capital.” It was a phrase he later apologized for using.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, back in 2015, said, “I think AI will probably, most likely, sort of lead to the end of the world. But in the meantime, there will be great companies created with serious machine learning.” Eleven years ago, nobody took his apocalyptic words too seriously and many of today’s Gen Z leaders—many of whom listed in this publication—were still kids in school. Now, municipalities are fighting with the consequences of this emergent situation, where the construction of water-and-electricity-ravenous data centers has become one of the most contentious domestic issues. Recently, residents in Andover, NJ, made national headlines when they successfully fought back against a data center being built, as more reports from around the country come in telling of depleted and ruined water supplies, noise, pollution, elevated ambient temperatures, negative wildlife impact, and concerns of associated health risks from the mammoth tech complexes—many

of which inhale more juice than cities and enjoy tax breaks. All this is taking place at a dizzying speed while regular Americans shoulder the ever-increasing costs of utilities from under-prepared infrastructure. How this is handled in the Garden State will be one of Governor Sherrill’s greatest challenges.

The grey-haired Baby Boomers and now-greying Generation X are the ones which are still principally in power in New Jersey and the country as a whole. But this is slowly changing with each passing year. The 2025 Gubernatorial Election saw a contest between Jack Ciattarelli, a Republican Baby Boomer born in 1961, and Mikie Sherrill, a Democrat Gen Xer, born in 1972. Sherrill triumphed with a solid mandate, 57%, and signaled that young vigor was demanded, and was coming, to the Garden State’s top leadership. Next in line are those gallows-humored Millennials who are no longer “the kids” in the room. They’re occupying key leadership positions, guiding, financing, and building institutions and pathways forward to shape New Jersey into the future, determined to get a slice of the American Pie they feel has been their birthright denied. Right behind them, with their own idiosyncrasies that each generation’s experiences bring, is Generation Z—those who

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have come of age fully in the “digital era,” more conservative for their age than previous generations. It may come as no surprise. They’ve inherited an unstable, uncertain world, where, like Millennials before them, they do not believe they will enjoy the same opportunities and securities as their parents’ and grandparents’ generations. America’s position in the world is no longer the unshakable, confident beacon of leadership. Idealism is a tough sell when wages are stagnant against ever-rising prices, and home ownership is seen as an increasingly hereditary phenomenon rather than a rite of passage. Economic turmoil coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by extraordinary tariffs and trade protectionism not seen since the Lost Generation, has forced young Americans to reassess their futures differently than the self-assured Baby Boomers now on Social Security who inherited the laurels of a Pax Americana. The world order is rapidly changing, and today’s leaders must change with it to meet the moment. Traditional alliances which have secured American hegemony are now deeply in question. Chaotic and inconsistent policy is now common, which is repellant to long-term investment and development outside the defense

and surveillance industries. For one example, in response to the first Trump administration withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Biden Administration re-entering it (worth noting that President Trump withdrew the US a second time, effective January 27, 2026), then-Representative Andy Kim (a Millennial) lamented a term he said his international contacts use in reference to unpredictable policy: “American whiplash.” He asked, in a rhetorical but nevertheless legitimate sense, “What is the value of the American handshake now?”

That was before Canada and Greenland—NATO partners—were threatened with annexation by Washington DC, employing language that the Lost Generation would have found astonishing. This first-named generation had championed the red-white-and-blue Wilsonian concept of self-determination, a product borne out of the mustard-gas-choked, bone-strewn and blood-drenched trenches of the Great War that left 37 million dead, wounded, or missing in Europe and the Middle East. Later, the Greatest Generation, which defeated global fascism, built a rules-based order centered on meticulous “legalese” and adherence to norms precisely to prevent the kind of upheaval and destruction which

had preceded the so-called Pax Americana, the presumably cruder imperial age of a planet divided into spheres of influence. It was hoped to replace the past “might makes right” order that made a world of men rather than a world of laws.

The rising generations of today face new challenges in new formats that previous generations could never have imagined—the rise of AI, for example, might bring opportunities if harnessed correctly, but also existential environmental, labor, and psychological risks regarding the future of employment, media, and bringing into question objective truth itself when mere words can become convincing images and videos. But in other ways, Millennials, Gen Z, Gen Alpha, and the newest of all, Generation Beta, which was born on January 1, 2025, will confront many of the same hurdles, obstacles, and threats to freedom of expression, association, and their pursuit of happiness, as the generations which preceded them. History may not repeat, it is said, but it does rhyme.



John Van Uliet
InsiderNJ



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1. LaMonica McIver



10th Congressional District Congresswoman McIver, on the cusp of turning 40, has seen her first term make her a nationally-recognized name as she spars with the Department of Justice over allegations of wrongdoing while attempting to carry out a congressional visitation to the ICE detention facility in her hometown of Newark last May. Succeeding the late Rep. Donald Payne, McIver handily won a special election and later the general

election to go to Washington. Her political interest and ascendancy had early origins, as future-mayor Ras Baraka served as her schoolteacher, and she later became the youngest elected member of the Newark City Council when she assumed office in 2018. An advocate for lowering the voting age for Board of Education elections, she is also the second African-American woman to form part of NJ's congressional delegation after

Bonnie Watson Coleman. McIver has had a baptism of fire unlike most members of Congress as she fights for her constituents as well as charges brought about by the DOJ, which Democrats allege are politically motivated. In the legislature, McIver has sponsored bills to increase oversight and transparency on ICE, the development of AI data centers, enhance women's protection, gun control legislation, and SNAP benefits.

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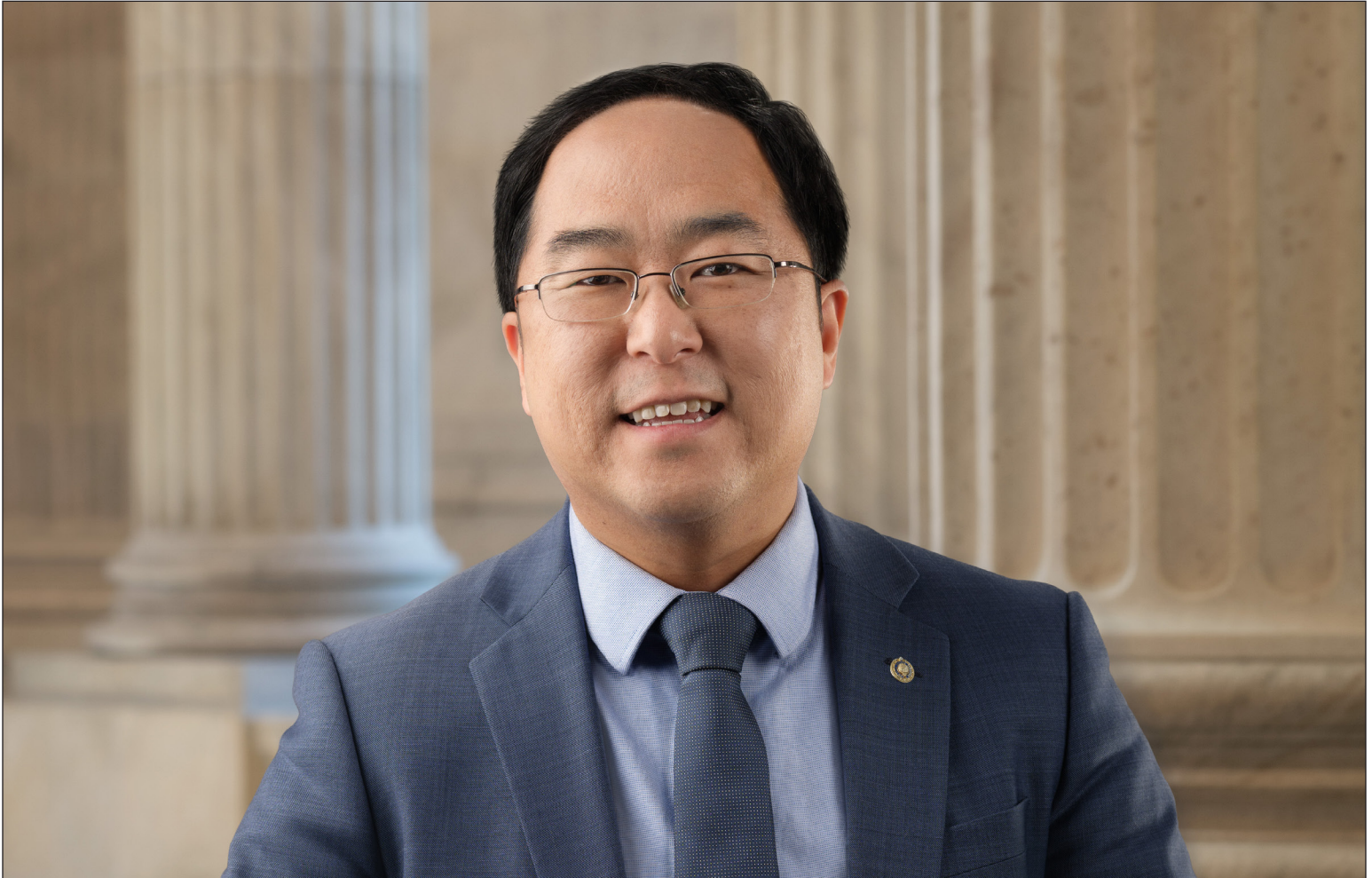
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2. Andy Kim



The state's junior representative in the upper chamber of Congress, the first Korean-American Senator from the east coast and one of its youngest members, Senator Kim cemented his place in New Jersey's political history for being the prime catalyst behind the end of the 'county party line' system, a political earthquake with an impact that has been felt during the past few election

cycles, particularly on the Democratic Party side. The 2025 gubernatorial primary was an intense battle, with the most crowded field of candidates in decades. In the 2026 special Democratic primary election in the 11th Congressional District, over a dozen candidates competed. The 2026 June congressional primary field had some of the most crowded battles in the nation, particularly in the 12th

Congressional District. That's, in large part, due to the demise of the 'line', which was the subject of a years-long effort that Kim didn't start, but did finish. Though he occupies a federal office, he still flexes his growing political muscle, most notably with his Statehouse testimony on the SCI bill last year, and his subsequent call for candidates in next year's legislative primaries. Watch for that.



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3. Alex Ball



Having served as her congressional Chief of Staff, Ball managed a strong gubernatorial campaign for Governor Mikie Sherrill in November, vastly exceeding expectations with a 14-point blowout victory over

Republican candidate Jack Ciattarelli. Under Ball's management, the campaign made huge inroads in revitalizing key voter bases for Democrats and for the candidate, particularly among younger voters, who trended

towards President Trump and Republicans in 2024. As Governor Sherrill's Chief of Staff, she has enormous influence over the future direction of New Jersey under Governor Sherrill.

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4. Rebecca Bennett

The former Navy helicopter pilot handily won the Democratic nomination in the 7th Congressional District Democratic primary, and is well-positioned to give Rep. Kean his strongest challenge in the battleground district. Bennett’s campaign – led by Om Savargaonkar, a rising star in his own right – expertly navigated a barrage of Super PAC attacks and negative mail amid a talented and young field of competitors that included Brian Varela and Michael Roth. Heading into the general election season, all eyes will be on 38-year old Bennett as she makes the case for her candidacy – and generational change – in the 7th Congressional District.



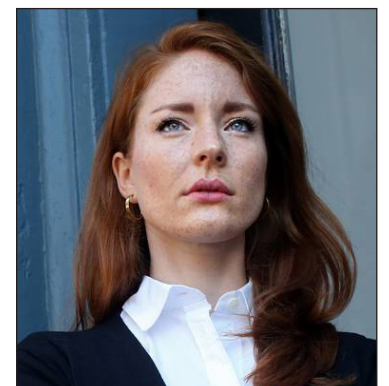
5. James Solomon

The Jersey City Ward E Councilman, who was first elected in 2017, convincingly won the Jersey City mayoralty in the beginning of December, running on a progressive platform that focused on affordability and housing. Vying to lead the state’s second-largest city, the race that began two years ago with the entrance of former Governor McGreevey was initially seen as a battle between McGreevey and O’Dea. Solomon advanced to the runoff with McGreevey, and ultimately won by a convincing margin, with city voters believing that Solomon was unencumbered by the past and represented a fresh future for the city. As his mayoralty takes shape and he navigates challenging fiscal times for the city, Solomon yields tremendous influence both at home and outside Hudson County.



6. Katie Brennan

The freshman Assemblywoman from the 32nd Legislative District ran a disciplined primary campaign last June, besting the Hudson County Democratic Organization-backed candidates in a six-person race, alongside running mate Ravi Bhalla. Now in the Statehouse, Brennan has become a leading progressive voice and has been determined to stake out strong legislative positions on issues impacting younger residents around the state.



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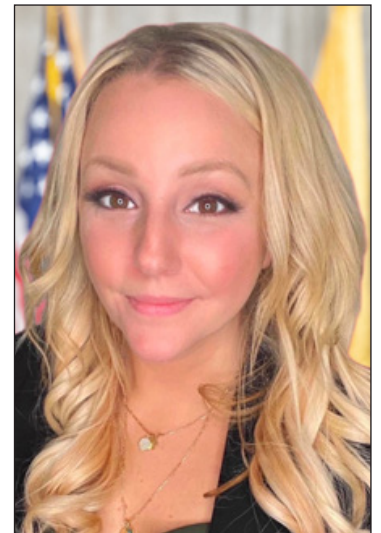
7. Frank Velez

The Belleville Mayor-elect convincingly won the mayoralty in May 2026 in a contentious race, embodying a generational change in the Essex County town. Still in his early 20s, he will be amongst the youngest mayors in the state, and currently is the youngest councilmember. He previously served on the town’s Board of Education and served as an aide to the late Congressman Pascrell.



8. Marissa Sweeney

Sweeney is one of youngest members of the Assembly following her victory in the 25th Legislative District, where she defeated incumbent Republican Assemblyman Christian Barranco in what was arguably the most surprising outcomes of the 2025 legislative election season. With the 25th Legislative District now a bellwether district – and potentially a real battleground – all eyes will be on the freshman Assemblywoman as she heads into 2027’s legislative re-election year, as Democrats look to defend the pick-up and possibly capture the second seat, and Republicans look to take back their lost turf.



9. Congressman Robert Menendez

The Congressman from the 8th Congressional District, one of the state’s youngest federal representatives, has made a distinctive mark in Hudson County and beyond since his election in 2022, and has handily won Democratic primaries by huge margins. His 2026 June primary victory was a lopsided blow-out, and removed any lingering doubt about the Congressman’s durability.





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10. Fatima Heyward

The President of the New Jersey Young Democrats, Heyward was elected President of the national Young Democrats of America and played a key role in motivating younger voters during the 2025 state elections. She'll be a voice for younger voters in New Jersey, and nationwide, heading into the 2026 congressional midterms.



11. Zach Mullock

The 40-year old Mayor of Cape May City secured the nomination in the Democratic primary in the 2nd Congressional District, besting three other candidates. As chatter begins about the district being a potential dark-horse pick-up opportunity, the young nominee offers Democrats a locally-grounded candidate to take on incumbent Republican Rep. Van Drew in the general election.



12. Joe Hathaway

Not yet 40 years old, congressional candidate Hathaway boasts an impressive resume. He graduated from Yale, served as an aide to former Gov. Christie, and served on the Randolph Township Council, and as mayor of the same. While he came up short against Analilia Mejia in the special election for the 11th Congressional District, he cinched the Republican nomination in the 2026 June Primary. The Millennial former mayor will go head-to-head in a rematch with the Gen X progressivist champion in November in what will be one of the most intense mid-term elections in recent American history.



13. Matt Platkin

The former New Jersey Attorney General was one of the youngest in the position in the nation, and consistently garnered headlines in Governor Murphy’s final two years in office, showing increased independence while yielding tremendous legal influence. As the Murphy Administration wound down earlier this year, Platkin opted to launch his own law firm, with the organizing principle of defending democracy and fighting against injustices.



14. Vin Gopal

The Millennial state senator from Monmouth County has proven himself a powerful player in the halls of Trenton. He flipped a Republican seat and carried his ticket in November of 2023, later becoming then-Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill’s gubernatorial campaign manager in the summer of 2025. Gopal’s ability to pull in popular support, raise money, and effectively communicate helped propel Sherrill to victory over challenger Jack Ciattarelli.



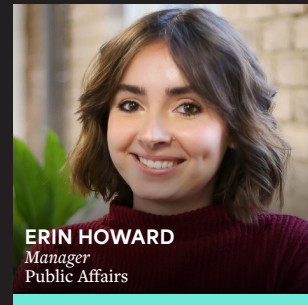
15. Britnee Timberlake

A proud product of Essex County, where she served as Freeholder Board President and later succeeding Sheila Oliver in the Assembly before becoming the youngest State Senator in 2024, Timberlake has been at the forefront of legislation bridging the realms of law enforcement and building trust among the Garden State’s immigrant communities. An outspoken critic of federal immigration policies, Timberlake has also been a strong advocate for maternity issues, childcare, and affordable housing.



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16. Jamie Serruto

The 24-year old Republican served as a deputy campaign manager to Senator Jon Bramnick’s gubernatorial primary campaign and served as Board of Education member before winning a committee seat in Millburn in the 2025 election, helping to put Republicans in control of town government.



17. Gen Z for New Jersey: Ben Dziobek, Shayla Nunn, Kayleigh Lavernia, Sunni Vargas

The board members of Gen Z for New Jersey have built their political action group into a leading resource and support system for building a deeper bench of young leaders around the state, with the aim of empowering the next generation of candidates.



18. Yenjay Hu, Anjali Krishnamurti

The co-founders of the New Jersey chapter of the Vote16 movement helped lead the way for the lowering of the voting age in several municipalities for Boards of Education elections. Now, the focus turns to increasing engagement and education on the participatory importance of younger exercising their right to vote.



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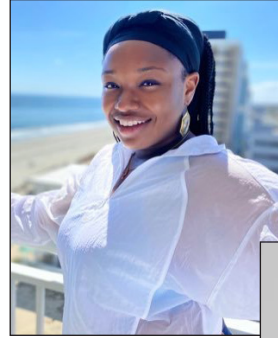
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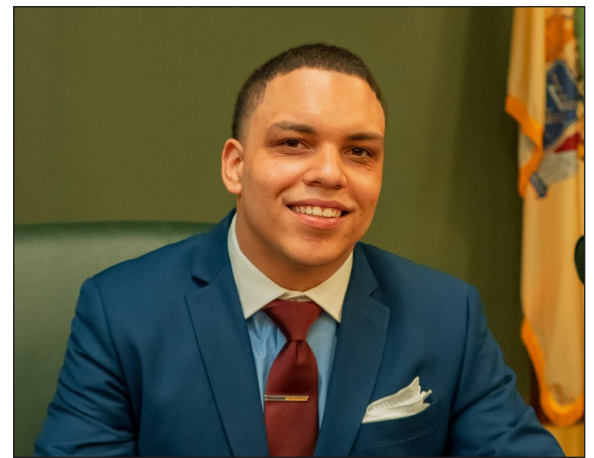
19. A’Dorian Murray-Thomas, Medinah Muhammad



Murray-Thomas previously served as a Newark Board of Education Trustee and founder of the nonprofit SHE Wins, and won election to the Essex County Commission Board in 2024, currently its youngest member. A former legislative staffer, Muhammad has the backing of the Essex County Democrats for a district seat, and will join Murray-Thomas as one of the board’s youngest commissioners.

20. Quinton Law

First elected in 2021 to the council, Law is a rising South Jersey star who has served as mayor of Moorestown since January 2025. He’s the town’s first African-American mayor, and also its youngest-ever.



21. Andrew Macurdy

A former prosecutor, Macurdy ran a disciplined campaign for a 21st Legislative District Assembly seat and, along with his running mate, defeated two incumbent Republican Assemblymembers. Though the Assembly now has a Democratic supermajority, freshman Assemblyman Macurdy will undoubtedly be closely followed as Democrats seek to retain the 2025 battleground wins in the 2027 legislative election cycle, when popular Republican Senator Bramnick will be at the top of the ticket.



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22. Diya Patel

In purple Parsippany, where control has see-sawed between Democrats and Republicans over the past 10 years, Patel at age 23 won a council seat in November 2025 in Morris County’s largest municipality, becoming one of the youngest elected officials in the state.



23. Balvir Singh

The first Sikh-American elected to countywide office in the state, educator Singh was elected to the Burlington County Board of Commissioners in 2017 and was appointed to the Assembly earlier this year to succeed Congressman Herb Conaway in the 7th Legislative District.



24. Anthony Angelozzi

The Hammonton resident and educator won an Assembly seat in November 2025 in the battleground 8th Legislative District, and is one of the youngest freshman legislators at the Statehouse. He’s a potential candidate for higher office in the future.



25. Dyese Davis

The Chief of Staff to 11th Legislative District Senator Vin Gopal, Davis serves as the Monmouth County Democratic Organization Chair, and is one of the youngest county party organization chairs in the state.



26. Raj Mukherji

The veteran legislator advanced to the 32nd Legislative District Senate seat in 2023, and remains one of the youngest members in the Legislature. Ahead of his 2027 re-election bid, he's already corralled support from district, county, and statewide leaders.



27. Cristina Pinzon

The Stateside Affairs founder and Latina operative has a talented team alongside her, as her firm continues win national recognitions and honors for their work.



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28. Hassani Council

A social justice and public education advocate, Council is currently the President of the City of Newark Board of Education, overseeing the largest school district in the state with over 35,000 students and a \$1.6B budget.



29. Habib Kader

A Paterson resident, Kader has served at all levels of government – as a press staffer to United States Senator Cory Booker, as Chief of Staff to Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh, as Deputy Chief of Staff to 35th Legislative District Assemblyman Al Abdelaziz – and just assumed the role of Chief of Staff to freshman 35th Legislative District Assemblyman Kenyatta Stewart, who’s becoming a central power player in Paterson and beyond.



30. Intashan Chowdhury

A government management expert, Chowdhury got his start in Prospect Park and now serves as Business Administrator in Englewood Cliffs. An innovative thinker who’s received national acclaim for his efforts, he’s seen as a rising star in the municipal management world.



Congratulations

to the Institute's Nuzhat Chowdhury on
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work to protect NJ's democracy!



Nuzhat Chowdhury
Director, Democracy & Justice Program



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31. Jake Ephros, Joel Brooks

The two made history in Jersey City’s council runoff election, as the first Democratic Socialists ever elected to the council; Ephros in Ward D and Brooks in Ward B.



32. Mayrose Wegman, Rob Matos-Moran

Alongside a strong and talented board, Wegmann and Matos-Moran lead the New Jersey Leadership Collective, whose mission is to support rising young political and government leaders throughout the state.



33. Zoe Heath

The Sussex County Democratic Chair is one of the youngest county party organization leaders in the state. She is the founder and executive director of Sussex County Pride.



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34. Laura Bustamante

The talented operative previously served as Senator Andy Kim’s state political director, and now is in a top role in Jersey City as Mayor Solomon’s Chief of Staff, for whom she previously served as Chief of Staff as Councilman.



35. Chigozie Onyema

The Newark West Ward Democratic leader and 28th District Assemblyman has proven to be a powerful force in Newark and Essex County, and is one of the youngest legislators in Trenton.



36. Mike Inganamort

The 25th Legislative District Assemblyman, who sits on the Assembly Budget Committee, is one of the youngest Republican legislators at the Statehouse, and has made it a priority to increase messaging to younger residents.





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Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey congratulates all the Millennial and Gen Z reproductive freedom champions who are leading our state forward. Together, we'll work to ensure **everyone** - no matter who you are, where you live, or how much money you have - can access the full range of reproductive health care services we need and deserve.



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info@ppactionnj.org

37. Tony Perry

The long-serving mayor of Middletown continues to be a formidable young Republican leader, having honed his skills while serving as Chief of Staff to former Senator Joseph Kyrillos. He is currently running for a Monmouth County commission seat in the November general election.



38. Orlando Cruz

First elected in 2023, the Passaic County Commissioner is the youngest on the county’s governing body, and one of the youngest commissioners in the state, and won the June 2026 Democratic primary victory by a convincing margin.



39. Lee Clark

The environmental policy leader serves as the Democratic Chairman in Phillipsburg, and won re-election to the Council in November 2025. An adjunct professor at Kean University, Clark serves as program manager for New Jersey Future’s Funding Navigator Program.’



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Mariel DiDato, Director of Government Relations and Communications



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40. Linwood Donelson

An attorney, Donelson was re-elected Salem County Republican Organization Chair in 2024 and is the youngest Republican county chair in the state, and among the youngest statewide. Under his leadership, Republicans flipped the last remaining Democratic office, the surrogate, in November 2025, for total Republican control of the county.



41. Donnie DeDio

The Chief of Staff to 40th Legislative District Senator Kristin Corrado, the young Republican won a council seat in the November 2025 general election in Wayne Township, the largest suburb in Passaic County, and is the youngest member of town’s governing body.



42. Paul Duerr

The Hawthorne resident, a rising star, ran a strong race for a council-at-large this November, and came within a few percentage points of winning in the historically Republican town. A Rutgers University student, Duerr is also a self-published author, having written eight books already – and currently writing his ninth.



AMERICA AT A CROSSROADS: STEVE ADUBATO IN CONVERSATION WITH U.S. SENATOR CORY BOOKER

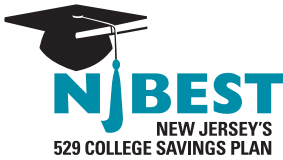


SteveAdubato.org

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Steve Adubato, PhD

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U.S. Senator of NJ
Cory Booker



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43. Gabe Plumer

The Chair of the Hunterdon County Republican Party is amongst the youngest county party organization chairs in the state, and has served previously as the Mayor of Alexandria Township.



44. Tyler Burrell

A rising South Jersey star, Burrell became a Delran councilman at 19 and advanced to the Burlington County Commission board, becoming one of the youngest county commissioners in the state.



45. Jack DeGroot

The Republican Sussex County Commissioner won election in 2023 after defeating an incumbent in the primary, and is the youngest on the county’s governing board. He’s running for re-election in the November general election.



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Zoe Stokes



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46. Kate Delaney

A key leader for the South Jersey Progressive Democrats, Delaney has been a strong voice against machine politics, and notched a recent victory by winning the majority of Cherry Hill Democratic Organization committee seats after a lengthy court battle.



47. David Daughety

Elected to the Newark Board of Education in 2025, he is the city’s first Gen-Z elected official, and has made it a priority to increase engagement and representation for students and younger residents. A former leader of the Newark Student Union, he helped lead the campaign for a ‘Students’ Bill of Rights’.



48. Eric Arpert

The young Republican operative helmed Jack Ciatterelli’s 2025 gubernatorial campaign, for the second time, and while the results weren’t nearly as close as in 2021, the campaign manager’s operation enthused statewide Republicans and put statewide Democrats to the test, in what turned out to be tough electoral terrain for Republicans.





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Pictured above (l-r):
Secretary-Treasurer Tina Dare, President Steve Beatty & Vice President Petal Robertson

49. Michael Suleiman

The former Atlantic County Democratic Chairman has made it a priority to support the next generation of candidates, and is the founder of the non-profit ‘South Jersey Forward’. He’s a potential Senate candidate next year in the 2nd Legislative District.



50. Kenneth Gonzalez

The former Executive Director of the New Jersey Republican Party engineered Clifton Councilwoman Rosie Pino’s razor-thin victory in the 9th Congressional District Republican primary in June 2026.



51. John Rendiza, Alice Merolli

Rendiza was re-elected President of the New Jersey Federation of College Republicans, the first to serve more than one term, while Merolli serves as President of the College Democrats of New Jersey.





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52. Robert Arace

The former Mayor of Manchester Township, the Republican won a seat on the Ocean County Board of Commissioners in 2024 and was sworn-in as the youngest member of the county’s governing body, and is one of the youngest county officials in the state.



53. Jesse Kurtz

The Atlantic City 6th Ward Councilman has deep ties to the city’s business, education, and tech sectors, with a focus on transparency and energizing the shore city as the state’s premier go-to tourist destination.



54. Pearl Gabel, Megan Cryan, Sam Berman, Hira Shaikh, Joe Libutti

The rising stars are at the heart of the communications and public affairs team at Maggie Moran’s Moxie Strategies, which has become a national stand-out brand within two years of launching.



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55. Megan Coyne

A Vice President at Mercury Public Affairs, Coyne was a massively influential force for redefining government social media strategies in appealing to younger audiences, most notably seen in her work serving in digital platform strategy roles in the administrations of Governor Murphy and President Biden.



56. Eash Haughton

Having previously worked at Capital Impact Group, Haughton now serves in a key role in Governor Sherrill’s Administration as Director of Legislative Affairs.



57. Adrian Orozco

The educator, born in Colombia and raised in Elizabeth, is the New Jersey Political Director for SEIU 32BJ where he advocates for the union’s 15,000 members in the state.



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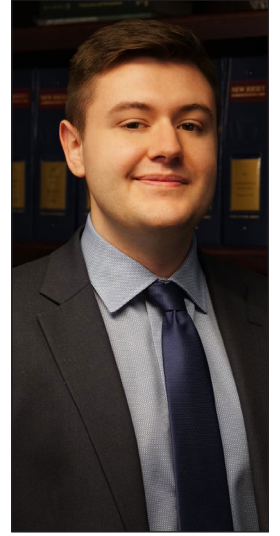
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RWJBarnabas Health, NJM Insurance Group, New Jersey Education Association, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ, the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey,
New Jersey Realtors, the Schumann Fund for New Jersey and Wyncote Foundation

58. Osner Charles, Sarah Seaboldt, Trevor Mulhall

The three young lobbyists are rising stars at MBI, one of the state’s biggest and most respected lobbying firms.



59. Sam Weinstein, Tre Scott, Zoe Stokes, Ethan Andersen

Weinstein, Scott, and Stokes are the next generation leaders of the state’s most impactful lobbying firm, Princeton Public Affairs Group. Andersen is the managing director of the firm’s affiliate Princeton Strategic Communications.



60. Sabeen Masih

The Capital Impact Group partner serves on numerous boards and commissions, including the Mercer County Parks Commission, serves as a mentor for the Women’s Leadership Council at Rider University, and is the co-founder of the Asian Women of Trenton Networking Group.





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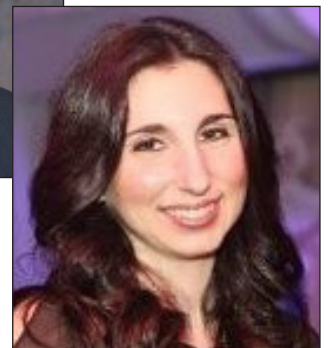
61. Adam Wingate

A former Harristown Township Councilman and candidate for Gloucester County commissioner, Wingate serves as the Gloucester County Republican Organization Chair. He was reelected as chair by a wide margin in June 2026.



62. Adam Guziejewski, Laura Gunn

A public policy and government affairs veteran, Guziejewski last year took the helm of Katz Government Affairs as President, succeeding Carol Katz, and Gunn now serves as Vice President at the firm.



63. Nuzhat Chowdhury

The senior counsel for the NJ Institute of Social Justice, Chowdhury played a key leading role in the campaign supporting the New Jersey Voting Rights Act, as well as championing lowering the voting age for school board elections.



64. Zach Metzger

The 18-year old high school senior won a seat on the Freehold Regional Board of Education, winning in a landslide to become the youngest-ever on the board, and one of the youngest officials in the entire state.



65. Jason Cilento

The Republican first took office as a councilman in Dunellen in 2011, serving for 9 years until being elected mayor in 2020, a position he still holds today, and serves in the influential position of President of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors.



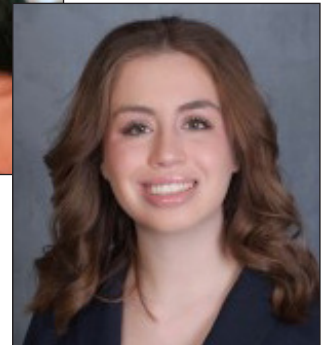
66. Stephanie Lagos

Serving as First Lady Tammy Murphy's long-time Chief of Staff, Lagos won a seat on the Bordentown Board of Commissioners in November. The highest vote-getter in the election, she'll start her tenure by serving as Mayor of the town.



67. Saanvia Kulkarni, Kate Mirne

Kulkarni serves as NJ High School Democrats President, and is a leading advocate for lowering the voting age. Mirne served as NJ High School Republicans Chair, and was an advocate for the ‘Involve Our Youth Act’.



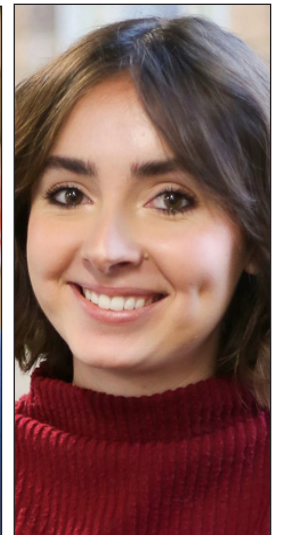
68. Sara Sooy

The Somerset County Commissioner, first elected in 2018, is the youngest on the dais, and among the youngest elected county officials in the state.



69. Vin Ciniello, Jonathan Scharff, Erin Howard

The three are rising stars at one of the state’s leading public affairs and public relations firm, Avoq, and each have expertise in public policy messaging, coalition-building, and strategic communications efforts.



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70. Molly Linhorst

A Harvard Law graduate, the staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union-New Jersey scrutinizes federal policies on detention and immigration law, and was one of the representing attorneys for six international Rutgers students who had their F-1 student visas revoked.



71. Samip Joshi

The mayor of the state's fifth largest municipality is in his mid-30s, and was sworn-in to his second term in office in January 2026. He made history becoming the town's first Indian-American mayor, and in securing re-election, he's already outlasted many of his one-term predecessors.



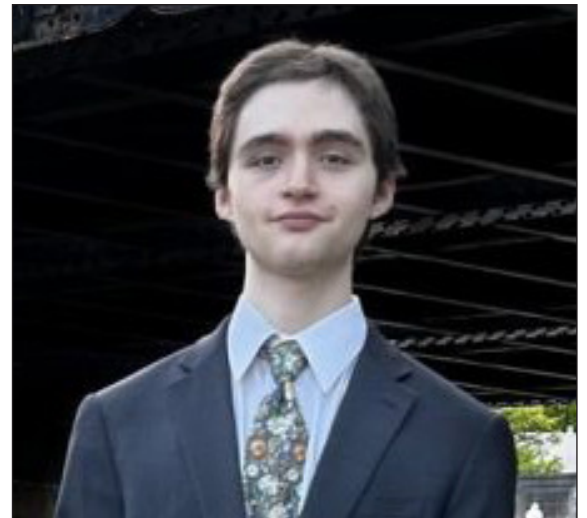
72. Brielle Winslow-Majette

The Acting Executive Director of Garden State Equality, the state's largest LGBTQ+ organization, takes the helm of the powerful advocacy group at a precarious time for the LGBTQ+ community, particularly for transgender youth.



73. Max Kravitz

A member of the Maplewood Arts Council, the 20 year-old sought a seat on the township committee in the June 2025 Democratic primary, offering to bring a generational change to town government.



74. Amanda Baumunk

The high school student ran for a Montgomery Township Committee seat in the June 2025 Democratic primary at age 17, making her one of the youngest candidates to seek office anywhere in the state.



75. Ahmed Shehata

A Rutgers and Seton Hall graduate, Shehata was appointed to the New Jersey State Board of Education in 2024 as its youngest member, and also serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Business for the Clifton Public Schools.



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76. James Kern

The Republican Warren County Commissioner was once the one of the youngest mayors in the state at the age of 22, and from there ascended to countywide office. In 2025, he secured a third term as commissioner and served President of the New Jersey Association of Counties.



77. Kate Gibbs

A former Burlington County commissioner, Gibbs stepped into the role of the New Jersey State Republican Party’s Executive Director as the 2025 gubernatorial campaign was kicking into high gear, as the Republican faithful exuded confidence and energy on behalf of candidate Jack Ciattarelli, giving Democrats palpitations in the weeks leading up to Election Day. Following the election, Gibbs stepped away from the role, but remains influential as ELEC825’s Deputy Director.



78. Ray Woods

The former legislative staffer and lobbyist is running for Mayor of Merchantville in Camden County, and is framing his and his running mates’ candidacies as a generational transition in town leadership.



79. Danielle Ireland-Imhof

The Passaic County Clerk, re-elected in 2023, is a popular presence in the county, and has made strides in modernizing the clerk’s office and expanding accessibility to services. She’s one of the youngest county-level constitutional officers in the state.



80. Jasi Edwards

The Trenton Councilwoman, an anti-gun violence advocate, announced her candidacy in December 2025 for Mayor of Trenton in this year’s municipal elections.



81. Owen Bros

The Rutgers Law student is running for Ocean County Democratic Vice Chair on the ‘Ocean County Democrats for Progress’ slate, with a priority of giving younger people a greater voice.



82. Alias Ragsdale

A rising star, Ragsdale won a seat on the Clifton Board of Education on his second attempt in November 2025, and becomes one of the youngest elected officials in the state. A recent winner of the Russ Berrie Award, Ragsdale is also one of the youngest state party committee members.



83. Daniel Golabek

The former Elmwood Park and Garfield city manager took the helm as Business Administrator of the City of Paterson, the state's third largest municipality, under the leadership of Mayor Sayegh, who secured a history-making third term in May 2026.



84. Max Blum

A former Chief of Staff to the late former Senator and Governor Richard J. Codey and Assemblywoman Collazos-Gill, now working in the NJ Department of State, Blum sought a seat on the Morris County Board of Commissioners last year, as Democrats hope to make in-roads in the purple county with an all-Republican commission board.



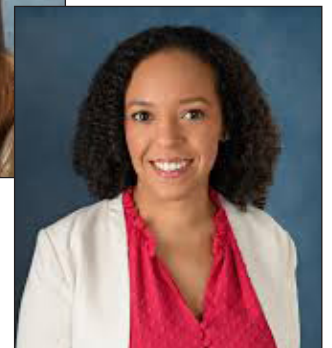
85. Mussab Ali

The former President of the Jersey City Board of Education made a spirited run for mayor earlier this year, ultimately backing fellow young progressive James Solomon in the runoff election, and ran in the 8th Congressional District primary this year. Ali is the founder of the Leadership Institute, which aims to provide training and resources to the next generation of young leaders.



86. Sam Bender, Alexis Bailey

The two associates at New Jersey Public Strategies Impact Group, one of the state’s biggest lobbying firms, are rising stars; Bailey also serves on the Jersey Shore Girl Scouts’ Board of Directors and Bender has deep South Jersey legislative experience.



87. Zach Dougherty

Dougherty gained acclaim as a high school and college student for his legislative advocacy on behalf of the state’s youth, and previously ran for council in Toms River. As the Legislature’s new session kicks off, he heads to the Statehouse as Assemblywoman Maureen Rowan’s Chief of Staff.



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88. Jess Murray, Mariel DiDato

Both at Hoboken Strategy Group, the young lobbyists boast credentials in policy and politics and use her wide and diverse backgrounds of expertise to deliver for their clients' needs.



89. Catherine Tung

Widely respected for her policy chops, Tung served in the Assembly Majority Office before joining powerhouse law firm McCarter and English. As Governor Sherrill begins her tenure in office, she's returning to Trenton as the new Governor's top policy advisor.



90. Kajda Manuel

The young activist, an Army veteran, recently launched a second candidacy for Council-at-Large in the City of Trenton.



91. Jonathan Chebra

A Bordentown resident, the former Chief of Staff to 7th Legislative District Senator Troy Singleton declared his candidacy for a seat on the Burlington County Board of Commissioners.



92. Desiree Grace

The former First Assistant US Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Grace was thrust into the spotlight earlier this year during the whole debacle involving the post. Grace acted with class throughout the skirmish, and ultimately returned to her previous firm, powerhouse McCarter and English.



93. Ali Aljarrah

An organizer who has worked with Working Families New Jersey and CAIR-NJ, Aljarrah rallied progressives and activists in his June 2026 Democratic primary challenge for a Passaic County commission seat.





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A photograph of the interior of a grand, ornate dome, likely a state capitol building. The dome is viewed from below, showing its intricate architectural details, including gold leaf accents, red walls, and a central circular opening. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and colors of the interior.

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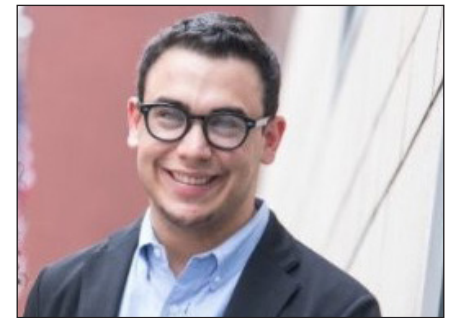
94. Carl Contino

Elected last year to the Vernon Township Council, where he also serves as Democratic Chair, Contino made history when he was sworn-in earlier this year as the youngest on the council, and Sussex County’s first openly LGBTQ elected official.



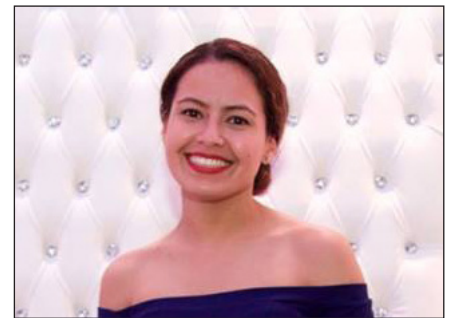
95. Juan Carlos Nordelo

The former staffer to Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and a founding member of Millennials For New Jersey, assumed the position of Chief of Staff for the New Jersey Department of Transportation.



96. Marelyn Rivera

After years of working in government leadership roles, the first-generation Latina operative recently launched her own firm, Conexion Strategies.



97. Pavel Sokolov

The Vice Chair of the Hoboken Republican Party previously ran for Board of Education in the Mile Square City, and was recently tapped to serve as the New Jersey State Republican Party’s Vice Chair as the organization looks ahead to the state’s midterm elections in the aftermath of the November 2025 election.



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98. Harry Clewell

A rising attorney, Clewell serves as Chair of Genova Burns' Corporate Political Activity and Election Law Group, and advises on elections, campaigns, finance laws, and PACs, among other myriad responsibilities. He previously ran for mayor in his hometown of New Providence.



99. Karlito Almeda

A former legislative and congressional staffer, Almeda joined the venerable Zita Group and was recently named a Vice President at the firm.



100. Matt Palumbo

The conservative commentator launched a podcast with former Parsippany Councilman Justin Musella. Together, the two have civil discussions with guests from all political backgrounds and viewpoints.

