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250  
— YEARS OF —  
INDEPENDENCE  
1776-2026

The graphic features the number '250' in a large, stylized font. The '2' and '5' are blue, and the '0' is white with a blue star inside. Below the number, the words 'YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE' are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font, with horizontal lines on either side. At the bottom, the years '1776-2026' are written in a red, sans-serif font.

2026 INSIDER 100

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# POLICY MAKERS 2026

**250**  
YEARS OF  
**INDEPENDENCE**  
1776-2026

## WHEN THE FOUNDERS ASSEMBLED AMERICA 250 YEARS AGO...

They advanced the organizing principle of policy for the country, namely monarchy-defying republican government. Having come through this year's 2027 Budget Process in a year when we celebrate our nation's semiquincentennial, we experience their grand design all over again, at the state level, with deepened kinship and gratitude to those sons of the Enlightenment.

We take inspiration from the vivid and vital process of representative government and the work of citizen legislators working with the Governor to sustain services for the people of New Jersey.

Was the process perfect?

Of course not.

We agree with Senator Declan O'Scanlon (R-13) about the rushed 11th hour conditions of the budget, and we too lament the lack of transparency down the stretch. But we also listen with care to what Senator John Burzichelli (D-3) said just prior to his "yes" vote on the \$60.7 Budget document, which is that if anyone doesn't think the Budget Committee presided over a transparent process



through long and exhaustive months of hearings and testimony, they haven't been paying attention.

It's true, what Burzichelli says, but it doesn't diminish the late budget flurry, obfuscation of detail, and intensification of questions, especially about expensive and – if they came to light earlier, certainly controversial – earmarks. A \$100 million loan for Jersey City as it grapples with its own local budget crisis and the prospect of a 20% tax increase seems especially onerous for New Jersey taxpayers. In addition, bills that appear to repurpose environmental dollars for recreation take on a meaning at odds with conservation. And these are just two examples.

This year's budget contains the woeful burdens of past state mistakes combined with punishing cuts enacted by the Trump Administration, which impact in an especially injurious way those New Jersey residents who depend on Medicaid. But we all know the deep troubles in the state as they relate to crushing property taxes, complicated by a housing crisis that makes it nearly impossible for many people to live here. The old problems persist - with a vengeance. Too many people. Not enough affordable housing. The enormous neighboring financial sector creates the market incentive for contractors to build (and build!) luxury housing for commuters – not workers. Substantial portions of the state are protected and environmentally sensitive. Undevelopable. New public demands – a consequence of AI, and population – overburden the energy grid. Any investment by government hovers dangerously at the edge of permanently expanding government. Programs meant to defray costs – unintentionally – simply end up contributing more brutal costs. All against the backdrop nationally of a madman throwing his ugly and decrepit face on the public domain, desecrating our common

temples, waging a war with masks and guns against the most vulnerable populations of the country, and dropping bombs on schoolgirls on the other side of the world as part of an unconstitutional \$2 Billion dollars a day war.

Our troubles seem intractable. Our system at present is ill-equipped and undermanned to survive the reversal of America's shift of power from the wealthy to the working class, and what is at the cancerous core of our government - wealth-infused corruption - and wave upon wave of foot soldiers unleashed in the cause of our own appetites, not the demands of citizenry prepared to protect our tough-fibered democratic republic.

But if we have a starting point, for all the ill it dishes out, the State Capitol in this place that helped shaped the foundations of the country continues somehow – even if only feebly at its best – to remind us of the seminal sacredness of civilized discussion and debate. We have to come back from the division to a sense of wholeness, and in the halls of government, here in New Jersey anyway, to the extent that people in both parties come from a place called America, 250 years old, we have an imperfect model, to strive, at this pressing and historic time, for a more perfect union. In the words of the WWI poet Ramon Guthrie, “We cannot win, though we perhaps have won, if we can only believe that this is not the end.”



*Max Pizarro*  
 Editor-in-Chief

# Congratulations

*to this year's Insider 100 Policymaker Power List honorees and to Insider NJ on celebrating the 10th edition of this influential publication!*



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# MIKIE SHERRILL

GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY



Even in the best of times (if such a condition ever exists) New Jersey presents considerable problems, bordering simultaneously on ungovernability and over-governance, making it both one of the most complex government cultures on earth and – at its worst - one of the most frustrating. In her first 200 days in office, Governor Sherrill demonstrated a willingness to get in there and scrap around with New Jersey’s very real issues. These include – to name a few – property taxes, energy, transportation, artificial

intelligence (AI), civil rights, and public safety. Remember, too, President Donald Trump willfully trying to contribute havoc in order to punish Sherrill and Democrats, starting with his mismanagement of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, the detrimental consequences of his budgeting to New Jersey’s energy, healthcare and transportation priorities, starting with the Gateway Tunnel, rampant deregulation to benefit billionaires, and his incompetent prosecution of the war with Iran and its



impact on gas and costs. Through these compounded crises, Sherrill – rising to the occasion – set clear and principled policy goals, presenting a budget that protects NJ seniors crushed by the impact of federal cuts to Medicaid, while fiscally responsibly curtailing – but preserving – the STAY-NJ program (in the face of resistance by the Assembly) based on income, reducing the qualifying income cap from \$500,000 to \$200,000. Saddled with the challenges of hosting the World Cup, Sherrill refused to kowtow to FIFA, standing by her promise to New Jersey taxpayers to protect them from transit rate hikes. The Governor released a comprehensive plan to regulate data centers to protect ratepayers from increased costs associated with high electricity demands imposed by large load data centers. Checking the unconstitutional practices of Trump’s ICE-contracted private detention center, Delaney Hall in Newark, Sherrill took



ownership of a developing crisis, deploying state police to safely disperse crowds and eliminate a chance that the unregulated, masked, unaccountable and unprofessional ICE – with a history of killing two American citizens in Minneapolis – would be in charge of crowd control. Sherrill also showed good faith with the families of detainees at Delaney Hall by increasing by \$12 million funding for the Detention Deportation Defense Initiative (DDDI), bringing the program total to \$20.2 million. In addition, the Governor effectively sued the Trump Administration to prevent the citing of a Roxbury detention facility, and signed legislation requiring law enforcement to identify themselves – without masks – to the public they serve. These are just some of the frontline, aggressive and constitutionally consistent initiatives and priorities of New Jersey’s policy – centered Governor.



## ALEX BALL

CHIEF-OF-STAF, GOVERNOR MIKIE SHERRILL



During budget negotiations, Ball maintained unflappable hard-nosed commitment to the governor's priorities, including the critical modification to the StayNJ Program, scaling the income requirement down to \$200K from \$500K. The chief could claim a victory with the budget upon delivery of a document at \$60.7 Billion – too much, of course, but what Sherrill asked for her in Budget Address to the state. The human lynchpin of Sherrill's inner sanctum and trusted guardian of the Governor's political and governmental designs, Ball has already proved herself a more than capable policy presence in Trenton.



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# CORY BOOKER

UNITED STATES SENATOR



The senior senator from New Jersey manages to stay aggressively relevant in the Trump era, presenting a principled alternative to the trainwreck in chief. He's had some wins, Booker, as he presumably readies himself for another presidential run. For starters, he submitted a bipartisan amicus brief in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia opposing

the Trump Administration's creation of the so-called Anti-Weaponization Fund, a \$1.7 billion pool of taxpayer money. The brief argued that the fund is an unconstitutional end-run around Congress—an unlawful attempt to direct federal dollars, potentially to individuals involved in the January 6 attack, without any congressional authorization. Booker – and his allies – won that



fight, critical as the President began losing support within his own party. Keeping with the organizing priority of the Constitution, the Senator grilled Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Trump's war in the Middle East, arguing that the Iranians continue to leverage the Strait of Hormuz while bulking up with money from the Chinese and through the Trump Administration's greenlighting of highly enriched uranium. "It's the exact deal you vilified President Barack Obama for having," Booker berated Rubio. "You've created a worse situation where our adversary and enemy is causing havoc in the region, funding proxies and terrorists, while they have discovered the power of shutting down the Strait of Hormuz as a consequence of this ill-conceived war, which never should have happened. You've made our adversary stronger while you're begging to get back in a deal." Booker raked FBI Direc-



tor Kash Patel too and in March, against the backdrop of ICE agents roaming Newark Liberty International Airport as Trump's government shutdown short circuited funding for TSA personnel, Booker went to the airport to denounce the President's efforts to cause pain to

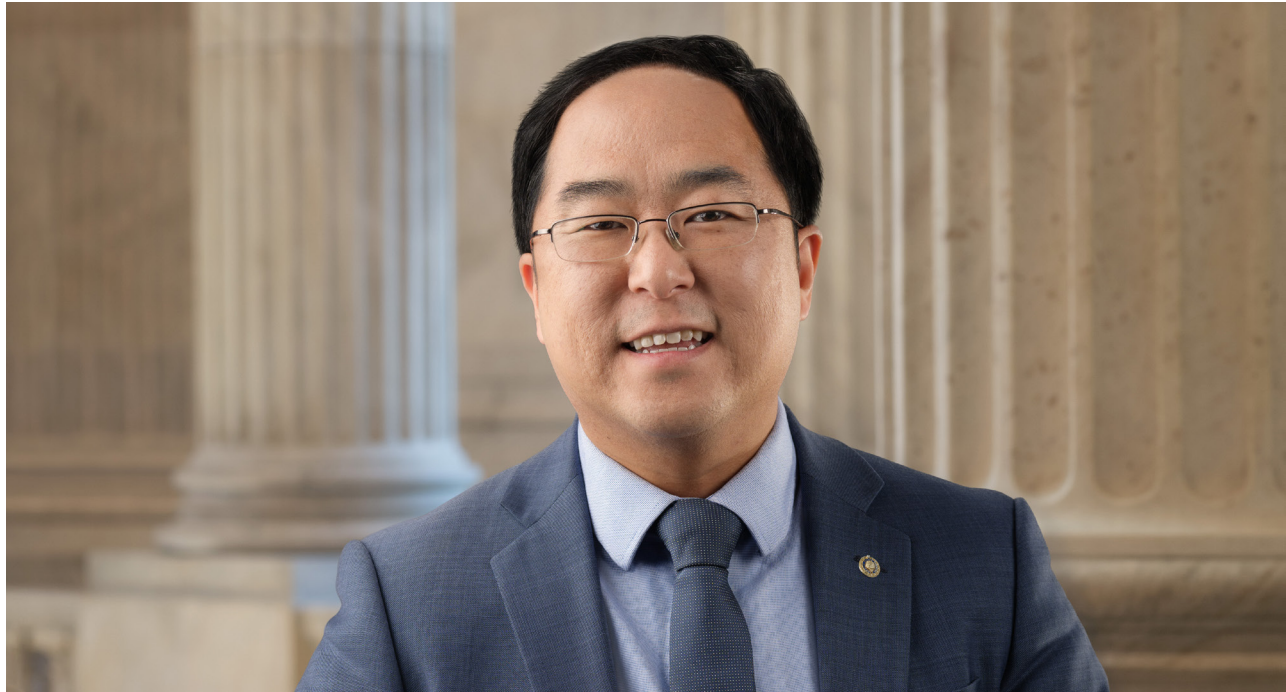
Americans in order to get more money "for an agency America has rejected." "He brings chaos and cruelty to the American people," Booker told reporters at the entrance to Terminal A. "We're seeing that now. We're seeing people having to wake up and leave their families to wait in a line. It is cruel and it is chaos. All over this country we are seeing the long lines."

Up for reelection this year as he paws the turf ahead of 2028, Booker faces a pro forma, Trump era challenge by Republican Justin Murphy, a former local elected official from Tabernacle.



# ANDY KIM

## UNITED STATES SENATOR



A 2024 Kim lawsuit destroying ballot bracketing in New Jersey significantly impacted the results of congressional Democratic Primary elections this year. Sensing opportunity with the county party lines no longer intact, multiple candidates crowded into the breach. In CD-11 and CD-12, the winners of the primaries carried no formal ties to the county establishments traditionally governing the politics of those districts. While Kim endorsed neither Analilia Mejia in the CD-11 special primary election for Mikie Sherrill's congressional seat nor Adam Hamawy in the CD-12, where he hopes to succeed retiring U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, both winners occupied the

primary progressive lane. With so many candidates contending and the organization line weakened, the Bernie Sanders-AOC-connection prevailed. Mejia and Hamawy can thank Kim for launching the lawsuit to begin with, which changed how New Jersey governs primary elections, until, presumably, lawmakers enact reforms of Kim's reform. Chiefly at issue remains the problem of elections that produce winners who have no mandate, where Hamawy, for example, wins with 28% of the vote in a chopped-up primary field. In Trenton, senators have already begun to consider refinements, like rank choice voting and run-off elections. Whatever they do, they will be reacting to what Kim already did.



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# JENNIFER DAVENPORT

ATTORNEY GENERAL, STATE OF NEW JERSEY



New Jersey's top cop has her work cut out for her as she tries to take care of the usual suspects on the ground, while also prosecuting a defensive legal war against the Trump Administration's dreadful attempts to crush New Jerseyans, especially on the Gateway Tunnel and ICE detention center fronts.



# CRAIG COUGHLIN AND NICK SCUTARI

SPEAKER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
PRESIDENT OF THE STATE SENATE



Heading into a legislative reelection year (2027), Democrats Coughlin and Scutari want to make the case that their party does something to make life more affordable – or bearable – for people. The Speaker carved out a significant legacy for himself as a champion of food access for the poor and working class (not to mention StayNJ), while Scutari will always be able to hang his legislative policy hat on New Jerseyans' adult legal access to pot.



# PAUL SARLO

STATE SENATE BUDGET CHAIR



The South Bergen diehard (still mayor of Wood-Ridge after all these years) stood again at the center of budget negotiations as Governor Mikie Sherrill negotiated her first budget. “There will be no government shutdown,” Sarlo announced in committee ahead of the Legislature’s full vote on the FY2027 \$60.7 Billion document. In addition to broadly overseeing the state’s finances and spending, Sarlo’s policy priorities include economic development, especially around gaming at the Meadowlands, and special education funding. Known for bipartisan goodwill and giving everyone on both sides of the aisle a fair break.

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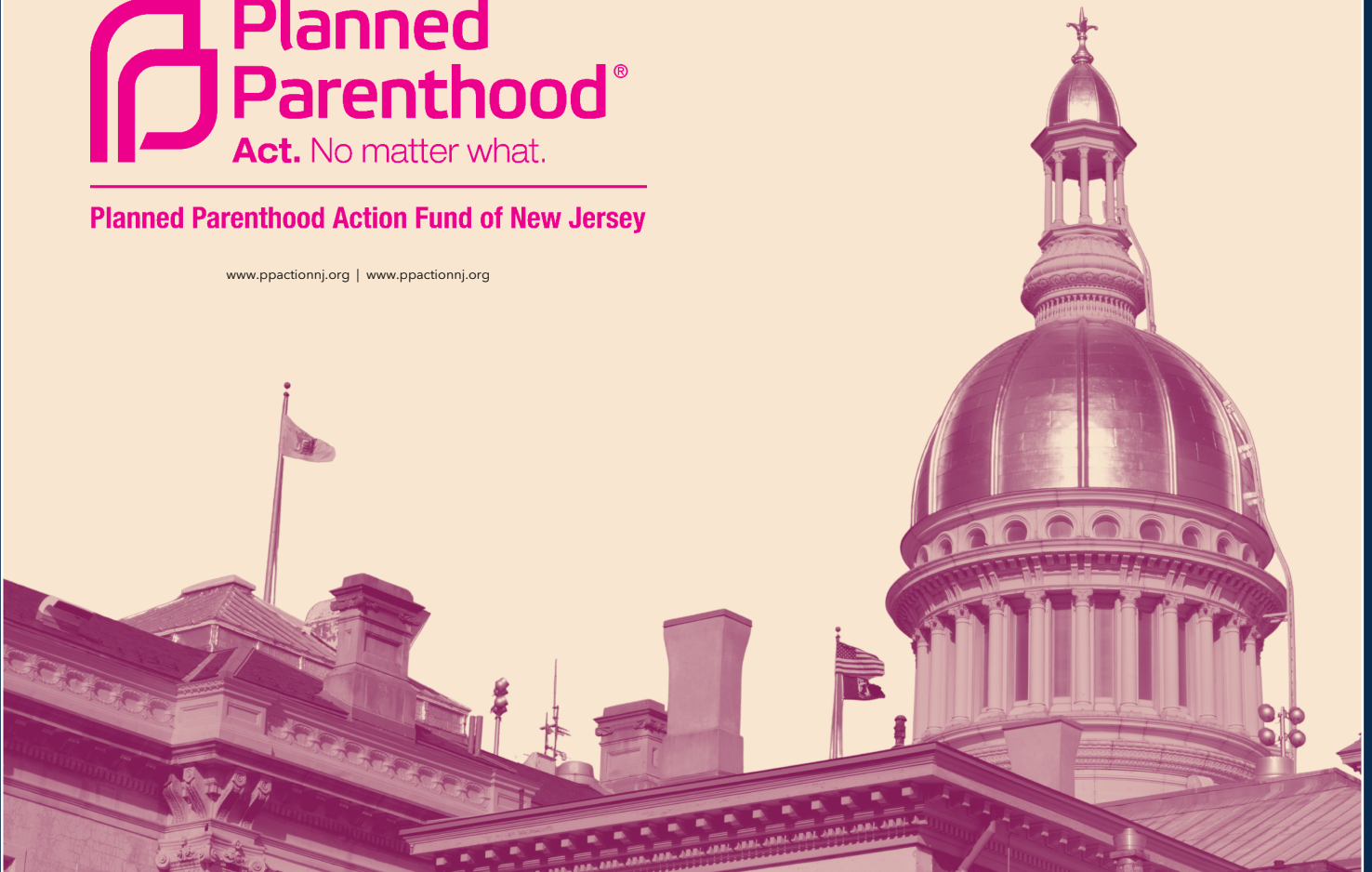
From strengthening protections for patients and providers to investing in access, many of the policymakers on this list are helping ensure New Jersey remains a **champion for reproductive freedom.**

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# AARON BINDER

TREASURER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY



Binder first joined the treasury department in 2021 as Deputy State Treasurer, assisting with management of the State budget and overseeing the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Revenue and Economic Analysis, and the Division of Taxation. Formerly served on the leadership team for the New Jersey Assembly Majority Office (AMO), including his most recent role as Deputy Executive Director. Binder leads one of the largest state treasury departments in the nation, with over 3,000 employees, 13 divisions, and numerous in-but-not-of agencies.



# KELLIE DOUCETTE

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, SHERRILL  
ADMINISTRATION



Formerly executive director of the Sherrill Gubernatorial Transition Team, Doucette oversees day-to-day operations and transformation initiatives in the executive branch. Her priorities include modernizing state government and making it more effective. Said Doucette as Trenton neared the end of the budget process: “The FY2027 Budget makes strategic investments to lower costs for families, strengthen our economy, and deliver high-quality services. The Budget Report Card demonstrates that we are taking the steps necessary to match those investments with greater accountability. This update to the Report Card ahead of the full Legislature’s vote on our budget reflects our commitment to transparency, effective stewardship, and continuous improvement across state government.”



# TIMOTHY P. LYDON

CHIEF COUNSEL FOR GOVERNOR SHERRILL



Formerly Policy Director and General Counsel on the Mikie Sherrill for Governor campaign, Lydon previously served as Executive Director of the New Jersey Senate Majority Office, Director of Cabinet Affairs for Gov. Jon Corzine, and Chief of Staff to Rep. John Adler. For over eight years, he also served as a New Jersey Superior Court Judge. When insiders talk about the Trenton insider on Sherrill's team, they usually mean Lydon.



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# JOE CRYAN

STATE SENATOR, UNION COUNTY



Along with Assemblyman Andrew Macurdy and Assemblyman Balvir Singh, sturdy legislative veteran Cryan in May announced a plan to end hundreds of millions in tax credit incentives earmarked for artificial intelligence data centers in New Jersey. The proposal would recoup for the state \$250 million in total. This savings, the senator, said, “would go instead toward ratepayer relief for residents hardest hit by increased utility costs, and toward investments in large-scale energy storage and community solar that will make the grid more efficient and lower bills in the long-term.” The announcement came amid “rising concern throughout the state about AI data centers driving up utility costs, as well as the enormous profits reaped by the data center industry.” It passed during the last session of

the budget season, along with Cryan’s other big pro-consumer bill targeting surveillance pricing. The bill, S-3612/S-3717, entitled the “Fair Price Protection Act,” would ban the practice, where the shopping habits, online activity and other behavioral information are collected and used to charge different people different prices for the same food items. “Surveillance pricing is an invasion of privacy and an abuse of modern technologies,” said Cryan. “Groceries are basic necessities that consumers need to feed themselves and their families. Working people are already confronted with increased grocery costs that are difficult to afford. They should be protected from the intrusive use of artificial intelligence, algorithms, and personal data to exploit their food purchases.”



# BOB SMITH

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
CHAIRMAN



For over two decades, Smith's been the most obvious veteran leadership presence in the state senate on the environmental and energy front. Now he occupies a crucial role as New Jersey attempts to address New Jersey's energy crisis intensified by data centers. "Although AI data centers have huge potential for our economy, they should not come at the expense of New Jersey residents and our environment," Senator Smith said in March. "These data centers must avoid pushing the state's already stretched energy grid to the brink, which would drive up costs for consumers, businesses, and families. By ensuring these facilities have a clear energy usage plan, and are prioritizing *clean* energy, we can prevent rising costs for consumers while achieving our clean energy goals."



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## BLAINE BOYD

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL AFFAIRS



Considering Trump's designs on yanking aid from New Jersey wherever he can and trying to destroy the Governor of New Jersey, Boyd has a critical job within Sherrill World.

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## JAY REDD

SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS,  
SHERRILL ADMINISTRATION



Experienced. Former Senior Counselor for Senate President Steve Sweeney, former managing director of Stono Public Affairs. Graduate of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University.

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# TROY SINGLETON

SENATOR, BURLINGTON COUNTY



New Jersey's affordable housing bulwark, chair of the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee and author of New Jersey's landmark affordable housing law, Singleton this past cycle praised the decision of the United States Supreme Court to deny efforts to delay the implementation, execution, and enforcement of constitutional affordable housing obligations under the Mount Laurel Doctrine pursuant to S-50:

"I applaud the Justice Alito's decision to once again soundly reject the baseless, politically-motivated attempts to undermine constitutional obligations under Mount Laurel," Singleton said. "These attempts, which would intentionally delay the much-needed creation of affordable housing, have now been rejected eight times at every judicial level, all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. No court has accepted their arguments, the stalling, or these last-ditch efforts."



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# KRIS KOLLURI

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER, NJ TRANSIT; HEAD OF THE  
TURNPIKE AUTHORITY



Prior to his appointment, Kolluri served as Chief Executive Officer of the Gateway Development Commission, a bi-state entity overseeing the \$16.1 billion Hudson Tunnel Project, the nation's largest and most urgent infrastructure project. In two years, he transformed the organization from a start-up to one that received the largest investment the federal government has ever made in any mass transit project, closed on the largest Railroad & Rehabilitation Improvement Program loan package in United States history, and initiated construction of the first set of heavy rail tunnels under the Hudson River in over one hundred and fourteen years. Previously, Mr. Kolluri served as President & Chief Executive Officer of Camden Community Partnership, Inc., a community and economic development nonprofit located in Camden, New Jersey. He oversaw an organization focused on designing and implementing outcome-focused and resident-driven programs.



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# RAJ MUKHERJI

STATE SENATOR, HUDSON COUNTY



The Senate Education Committee in June advanced legislation sponsored by Senators Mukherji and Vin Gopal (see below) that would require each school district’s board of education to incorporate instruction on voting in the Social Studies curriculum for students in grade 12. “In New Jersey’s 2024 general election, only 52% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 24 participated in the electoral process,” said Senator Mukerji. “This age group continues to have some of the lowest voter turnout rates in the country. With numbers like these, we need to do a better job of engaging young voters as early as possible. By making these lessons part of the classroom experience, we can make sure students understand not only why voting matters, but also how to participate in the process.” A key champion of the “Make Polluters Pay” bill.



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# BENJIE WIMBERLY

STATE SENATOR, PASSAIC COUNTY



When the United States Supreme Court on April 29th took a meat cleaver to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Senator Wimberly issued the definitive New Jersey rejoinder, which reads in part:

“The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy. Today’s Supreme Court decision weakening the Voting Rights Act is deeply concerning and represents a step backward in the ongoing fight to ensure fair and equal access to the ballot.

“For decades, the Voting Rights Act has served as a critical safeguard against discrimination, protecting communities that have faced barriers to participation in our democratic process. Eroding these protections risks silencing voices and undermining the principle that every vote should carry equal weight.

“In New Jersey, we have made meaningful progress toward expanding access to voting and strengthening trust in our elections. That work must continue. We cannot take for granted the rights that so many fought to secure.”



# BRITNEE TIMBERLAKE

STATE SENATOR, ESSEX COUNTY



On March 25th, when Governor Sherrill signed into law a package of bills that included her bill codifying an AG directive to “Strengthen Trust Between Law Enforcement and Immigrant Communities.” Said Timberlake in Newark, “What we’re witnessing is an attack on our democracy and an attack on our Constitution. Worse, it’s an attack on all human beings, documented and undocumented. These bills are not anti-police. My bill in particular that codifies the Attorney General’s directive, in fact, protects local police, because it’s embedded in our Constitutional right as the state of New Jersey leveraging the anti-commandeering doctrine that says the fed government can come in here to administer their programs but we do not have to administer their programs for them. That is so incredibly pro local law enforcement. We do not want our men and women in blue being caught up in part in any human rights violation.” Next up for Wimberly and Timberlake: New Jersey protections against Trump’s SAVE America Act.



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# MARC PFEIFFER

SENIOR POLICY FELLOW, FACULTY  
RESEARCHER, BLOUSTEIN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT, CENTER FOR URBAN  
POLICY RESEARCH



Retired from a nearly four-decade distinguished career in New Jersey local government administration, Pfeiffer possesses one of the sharpest policy minds in New Jersey. Served as a municipal administrator in several municipalities and put in 26 years of service in the State's local government oversight agency, the Division of Local Government Services. His Rutgers policy class is simply a requirement for all future government leaders.



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## CHRIS TAYLOR

DEPUTY POLICY DIRECTOR, SHERRILL ADMINISTRATION



Former senior policy advisor and legislative assistant for Sherrill when she served in Congress.

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## PATRICIA ZITA

THE ZITA GROUP



Principal owner of The Zita Group, served as a Research Associate for the New Jersey General Assembly. Longtime veteran. One of the most distinguished and knowledgeable professionals in New Jersey. At the center of government negotiations to save public broadcasting in the aftermath of the Trump Administration's federal cuts.



# LAMONICA MCIVER

CONGRESSWOMAN, CD-10



At a June 3rd House Committee on Homeland Security hearing, McIver let Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin have it, accusing him of guard towering a weaponized immigration system for the President’s racist grievances. “Three-hundred detainees sent an SOS letter about the torturous conditions inside Delaney Hall,” McIver told Mullin. “I have spoken to these people. I have seen them with my own eyes.” She outlined accounts by detainees of green, rotten food, black mold shower stalls, inadequate cleaning supplies, horrific accounts about detainees getting dumped in solitary confinement, three detainees trapped in medical isolation, sometimes with no doctor present, pregnant women without getting OGBYN care, and two women who miscarried dismissed as psych cases. McIver supplied Mullin with specific cell numbers in at least two cases. “I hope you’re taking notes,” the congresswoman told him.

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



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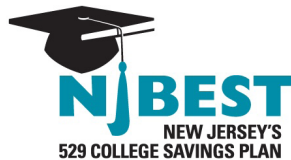
THINK TANK WITH STEVE ADUBATO

U.S. Senator of NJ  
Cory Booker



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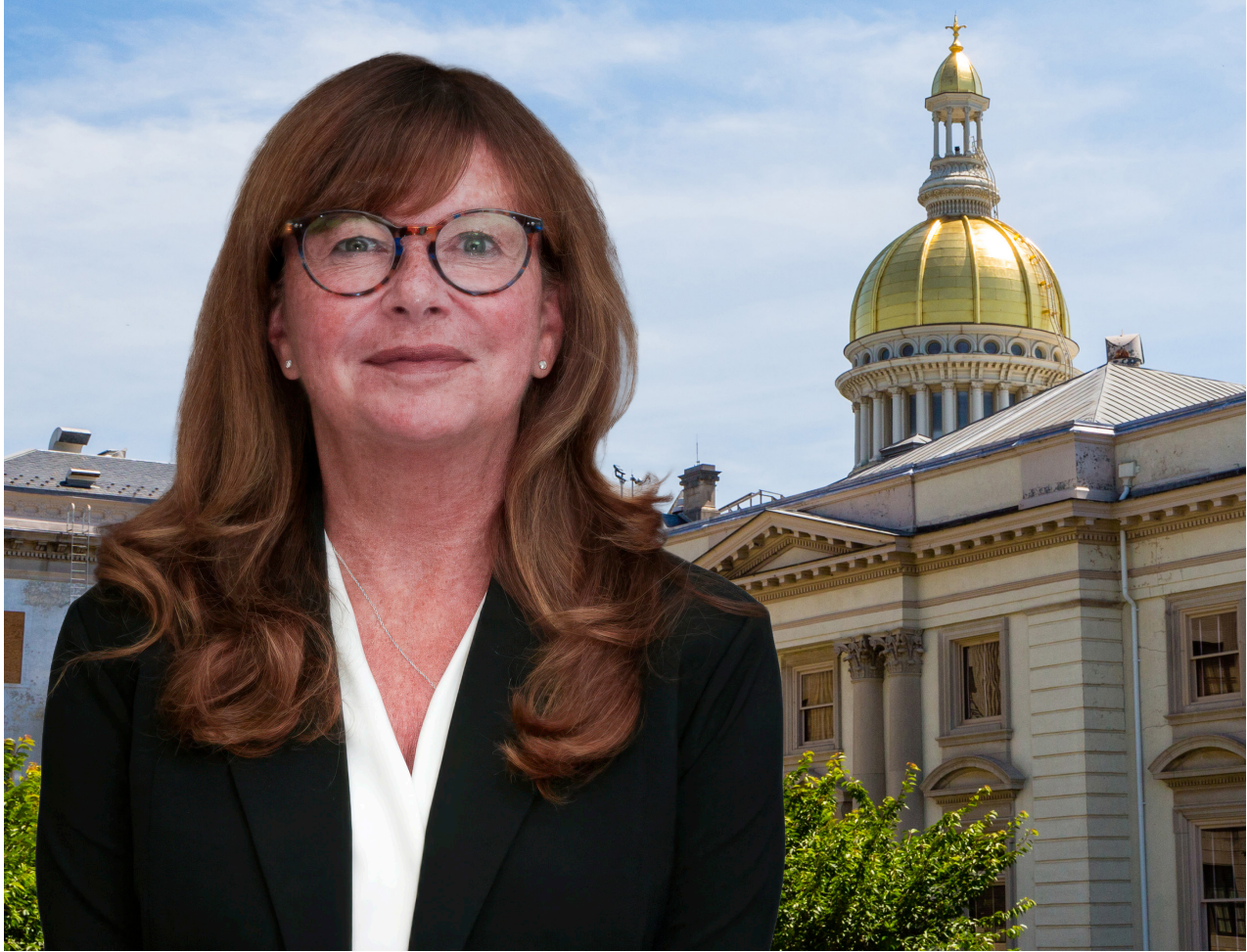
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# KAREN KOMINSKY

PARTNER, CLB



Partner at CLB, jack-of-all-trades, Kominsky immerses herself in numerous energy and environment-related issues. Local Councilwoman in Lambertville. Experienced, she served as Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Governor, State of New Jersey, for Governor Richard J. Codey and Governor James E. McGreevey from December 2002 until January 2006. Ran Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in New Jersey in 2008.



# KEVIN JARVIS

LABOR COMMISSIONER



Prior to his appointment by Governor Sherrill to lead Labor, Jarvis practiced Labor Law – including contract negotiations, grievances and arbitration hearings, Unfair Labor Practice matters and Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) litigation. Prior to that, he served almost four years as Chief of Staff at the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. In the past, he represented hundreds of workers, many from the building trades, who had been injured due to their workplace exposure to asbestos, and railroad workers injured by their workplace exposure to asbestos, diesel exhaust fumes, and other carcinogens.



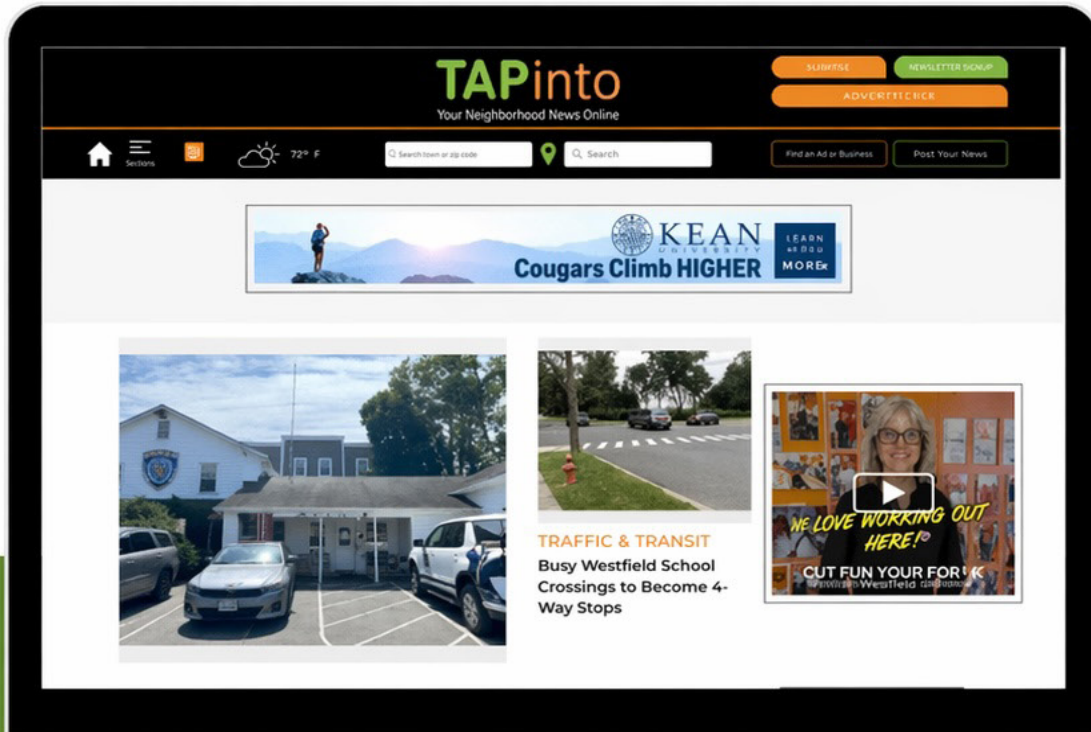
# VERONICA DURON

CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. SENATOR CORY BOOKER



Formerly with the office of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) Duron emerged as a force on Capitol Hill when she defended the Affordable Care Act during Trump's first presidential term. Former Legislative Director for Booker. Now manages a 60-person staff split between Washington, D.C., and New Jersey.

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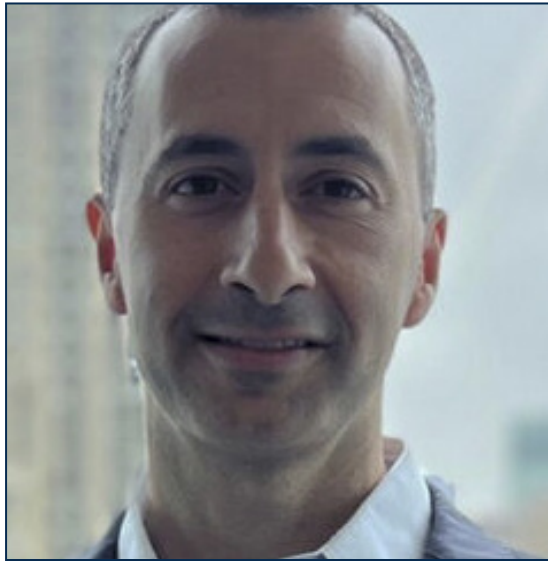




27

## BEN HERTZ-SHARGEL

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY BOARD OF  
PUBLIC UTILITIES (BPU)



Prior to his appointment by Sherrill to lead the BPU, Hertz-Shargel served as Global Head of Grid Edge at Wood Mackenzie, where he advised energy, technology, and financial firms on grid modernization, electrification, distributed energy resources, and emerging energy technologies. Previously, Hertz-Shargel served as Head of Data Science and Demand Management at Rhythm and as Vice President of Advanced Grid Services and Analytics at EnergyHub, where he designed and built core demand response optimization technology and served as a lead technical expert in stakeholder engagement before state public utility commissions.

28

## M. TERESA RUIZ

STATE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER, ESSEX COUNTY



The Hill this year recognized Ruiz as one of the most influential voices shaping public policy in New Jersey – and a nationally recognized leader whose policies in education, public health, and economic opportunity inform “change across the country.” A key Sherrill ally in the Legislature.



# ANTHONY VERRELLI

CHAIR, ASSEMBLY LABOR COMMITTEE



A carpenter by trade who once worked on the New Jersey Statehouse, Verrelli wants Governor Sherrill to build on gains for PLAs by properly enforcing the laws governing labor agreements, which might require more staffing at the state Department of Labor “to hold bad actors accountable,” he told InsiderNJ. “At the end of the day, it’s about the working people of New Jersey who live and work in New Jersey, so they can spend the money they make here.” At last year’s Building and Trades Conference, the chair of the Assembly Labor Committee reminded members of PLA gains with the Democratic Party. “We have to support the candidates who support us,” said the Assemblyman. “Look at the record. Don’t look at a single issue. It’s about collective labor. If they don’t support you when they’re in office, they won’t support you because they say they will, when they’re out of office.”



30

## JACQUELYN A. SUÁREZ

COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (DCA)



Responsible for a \$2.152 billion operational budget, overseeing more than 1000 employees, Commissioner Suárez occupies a key role in ending veteran homelessness in NJ, expanding shared services, developing homeownership opportunities, and creating a pipeline for public sector employment. Prior Director of the Division of Local Government Services since 2021.

31

## NEDIA MORSY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAKE THE ROAD NJ



A progressive policy wonk, leader Morsy also grabs a bullhorn in the clutch, as she did during the troubles at Delaney Hall, where her work went to the heart of a justice mission for the wrongly detained men and women inside Trump's private prison. A frontline activist in the cause to shut down Delaney.

# Congratulations to



Dale Florio



Janice Fuller



Bill Pascrell III



Kevin Hagan



Al Gaburo

## 2026 InsiderNJ's Policymakers List



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*Princeton Public Affairs Group*



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[wswdc.com](http://wswdc.com) | [ppag.com](http://ppag.com) | [princetonpsc.com](http://princetonpsc.com)



32

## ANA MARIA HILL

VICE PRESIDENT AND NEW JERSEY STATE  
DIRECTOR OF 32BJ SEIU



A veteran of Make the Road NY, first in her family to graduate from High School and the first in her family to go to college. At Columbia University, she deepened her passion for workers' rights, which led her back to the streets, where right now she is the most visible labor movement leadership presence in New Jersey.

33

## JILL HIRSH

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE NJ SPORTS AND  
EXPOSITION AUTHORITY



A distinguished attorney, President Hirsch is the first woman to serve as the Authority's top executive. Her appointment comes as the NJSEA continues to play a central role in statewide economic development, major infrastructure projects and the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Prior to joining Governor Sherrill's congressional office, Hirsh worked as an attorney with the Legal Aid Society, representing children in matters involving abuse, neglect, custody, guardianship, termination of parental rights, and juvenile delinquency. She later worked in adoption and served on the Board of Directors of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) of Essex County. In 2023, Hirsch was awarded the Star of Essex in recognition of her exceptional community service.



34

## VIN GOPAL

STATE SENATOR, MONMOUTH COUNTY



Chair of the Senate Education Committee, the Monmouth County-based Gopal has an agile mind and comes up frequently in discussions about future gubernatorial prospects. Look for him to emerge as a consensus establishment choice if Governor Sherrill returns to Washington on a successful national ticket.

35

## DAVID KNOWLTON

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE NEW JERSEY  
HEALTHCARE QUALITY INSTITUTE



Chair and CEO of the Cannabis Education & Research Institute (CERI), a leader on health care issues in New Jersey for the better part of four decades. A member of the National Quality Forum where he currently co-chairs the Neurology Measures Standing Committees, and chair of Compassionate Care Foundation, one of the original six medical cannabis vertically integrated alternative treatment centers in New Jersey. Formerly Deputy Commissioner of Health for the State of New Jersey during the administration of Governor Tom Kean.



# AMOL SINHA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ACLU-NJ



Under Sinha’s leadership, the ACLU of New Jersey, along with the National Women’s Law Center and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, in April filed an amicus brief in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in support of U.S. Representative LaMonica McIver, who is facing federal charges stemming from a congressional oversight visit of Delaney Hall. Sinha argued that McIver “appropriately moved to dismiss the charges due to her legislative immunity and because the charges were clearly political retribution, but her motion was denied.” Filed by pro bono counsel from the John J. Gibbons Fellowship in Public Interest and Constitutional Law at FBT Gibbons, the brief urges the appellate court to reverse the lower court’s decision and dismiss the indictment. “Congresswoman McIver was performing lawful and critical oversight duties at Delaney Hall – actions that are completely within her authority to do,” said Sinha. “Elected officials should not be targeted for doing their jobs or for disagreeing with President Trump about critical issues of the moment, including immigration. As the Trump administration attempts to silence opposition through fear, we urge the court to dismiss the charges against Rep. McIver to protect the fundamental pillars of our democracy.”



37

# CHIGOZIE ONYEMA

ASSEMBLYMAN, LD-28



Progressive, policy-driven lawmaker – a rising star in New Jersey politics. Making a mark in his first term as the author or co-author of bills benefiting working people, including the Fair Price Protection Act, which specifically protects cash-strapped grocery shoppers from online pricing abuses, and another bill that cracks down on landlords colluding to raise rents. Teamed up too with Senator Mukherji on legislation aimed at keeping corporate money out of politics. Attorney. Chair of the West Ward Democratic Committee.

38

# THOMAS KOENIG

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND FINANCE OFFICER,  
 NJ OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES



You can count on one hand the true experts of New Jersey’s (\$60.7 billion) budget, and near the top of that exclusive group, you’ll find Koenig. In April, North-Jersey.com quoted Koenig noting the “governor’s plan includes about \$2 million in cuts, much of which [probably consists of] initiatives that the Legislature added to the budget last year and that the governor recommends [eliminating] in fiscal 27.”



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39

## MAUREEN MCMAHON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

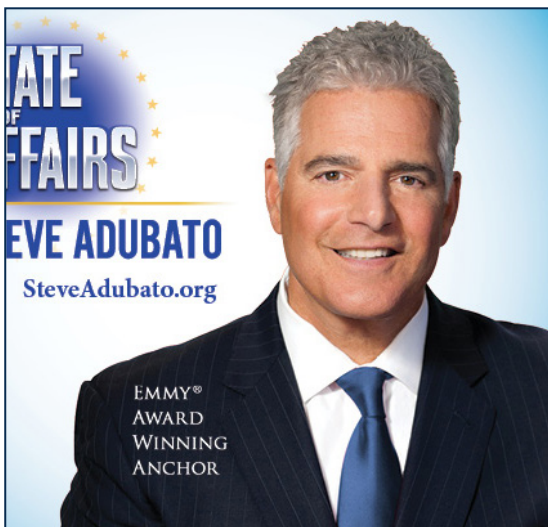


A veteran of the Legislature since 2002, the sought-after McMahon through the years has served as Lead Counsel and Section Chief of the Utilities, Transportation and Communications Section, Acting Section Chief of the Human Services Section, and Assistant Director and Director of the Central Management Unit. A graduate of Marist College and Rutgers University School of Law.

40

## STEVE ADUBATO, JR.

HOST, STATE OF AFFAIRS AND THINK TANK



The Emmy Award-winning (and future New Jersey Hall of Famer, along with the late Michael Aron) Adubato brings real world experience (he grew up in Newark in politics and served in the NJ Assembly) and erudition to the ongoing conversation about New Jersey's future. As host of Think Tank, he brings together thought leaders, innovators and experts from a variety of fields to explore the critical issues, trends and challenges facing society today. On State of Affairs, Adubato dives into all the policy machinations under the Gold Dome.



41

# DAVID BROGAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO OF THE NEW JERSEY APARTMENT ASSOCIATION



The lead voice in Trenton for the interests of the multifamily housing industry, Brogan and his association represent a quarter of a million rental units around the state. In the New Jersey Apartment Association, developers have an avenue to voice concerns and support for different policies in the State Capitol. Brogan meets head on those things in the legislative arena that may drive up the cost of housing, impact supply and demand, and worsen local hurdles for the development industry, including reg proposals for planning and zoning boards and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) rules that restrict developable land and/or drive up development costs. He particularly pays attention to mandates on housing providers. In Brogan's words, "Every mandate has a cost. Our job is to remind the legislature that every mandate has a cost." A United States Navy veteran, Brogan served from 1985 to 1989 as an Antisubmarine Warfare Operator and U.S. Naval Rescue Swimmer.



42

## DALE FLORIO AND AL GABURO

PRINCETON PUBLIC AFFAIRS (PPG)



The leaders of New Jersey's biggest and most successful lobbying and public affairs firm, the pair possess deep policy chops in multiple disciplines. They lead a ubiquitous team of pros, which includes the ever-visible and relevant Kevin Hagan, formerly of State Sweeney World.

43

## TOM BRACKEN

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



A retired banker, Bracken in 2017 helped establish and became co-chair of Opportunity NJ, a coalition of major state business organizations supporting government policies that pave the way for job growth, affordability and prosperity in the state. A member of the New Jersey Business Hall of Fame, in 2014, Bracken became chairman of Forward NJ, a coalition promoting investment in the state's transportation infrastructure.



MICHAEL KEMPNER,  
Chief Executive Officer



MAHEN GUNARATNA  
EVP, Public Affairs



STEVE SANDBERG,  
SVP and Managing Director, Public Affairs



JACKIE CORNELL  
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# MICHELE SIEKERKA

PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY BUSINESS  
AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



NJBIA President Michele Siekerka holds over a decade's worth of experience and accomplishments with the NJBIA, defending the business community's interests in a state fraught with high corporate taxes and legislative challenges. On behalf of the business community, she led the charge against the Climate Superfund Act. Skillfully navigating political circles, she has taken on Trenton policies under Murphy and Sherrill while also leading NJBIA's partnership with the NJMEP. She is one of the state's leading women business advocates and was made Chair of the Conference of State Manufacturer's Board of Directors. During the 2025 gubernatorial election, she presented NJBIA's "Blueprint for a Competitive New Jersey" to both candidates, offering their solutions to a multitude of tax, education, labor, insurance, and regulatory concerns facing the state.



# ANGELO GENOVA

CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING PARTNER,  
GENOVA BURNS



The state's foremost election law attorney, the veteran legal mind will continue to aggressively engage amid official ongoing examinations into elections integrity, both in New Jersey and nationally. Earlier this year, in conversation with InsiderNJ, Genova constitutionally contextualized President Donald J. Trump's expressed desire to "nationalize" elections in the United States of America.

"It's clear that what he proposed - nationalization of elections - clashes pretty directly with the Constitution, Article 1, Section Four, Clause 1," said Genova:

*The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof* Trump's comment, he added, "collides with the fundamental bedrock of the Constitution's framework governing elections."



46

## TED ZANGARI

ATTORNEY, SILLS CUMMIS & GROSS



Zangari chairs his firm's Real Estate Department as well as its Redevelopment Law, Outside General Counsel, and Public Policy/Governmental Affairs Practice Groups. Chair of the Firm's cross-disciplinary Redevelopment Law Practice Group, he specializes in brownfield, transit-oriented, central business district and waterfront redevelopment projects as well as adaptive reuse projects at obsolete or vacant corporate campuses and shopping centers.

47

## LUCAS MARXEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATIONS GROUP AT THE EDWARD J. BLOUSTEIN SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC POLICY AT RUTGERS



Expert in planning, policy, data analysis, and public informatics development, Lucas leads applied research projects focused on supporting state and local planning and policy making across various aspects of climate change, environmental policy, and resource development/management. According to Rutgers, "He manages a team leading the development of digital informatics systems that combine computer science and data visualization techniques into platforms that bring research and data to a broad set of stakeholders to support decision-making across a diverse range of subject and research areas. Lucas also has expertise in developing geographic information systems (GIS), enabling spatial analysis and modeling for research initiatives in a variety of disciplines."

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48

## JOHN REITMEYER

REPORTER, NJ SPOTLIGHT NEWS



The Samson Agonistes of government news reporting, Reitmeyer stands in the temple essentially holding up the pillars of what remains of the demolished Fourth Estate in the New Jersey Capitol. His budget dispatches comprise essential reading for even the most care-free wonk, and, in fact, provide the crafters of the state budget with the primary source materials they need to start – and finish – the process. From Reitmeyer’s penultimate piece on the budget: “A nearly \$61 billion spending plan that increases funding for direct property tax relief and K-12 public school aid, while also temporarily expanding New Jersey’s child tax credit, is planned to clear the full Legislature in time for Wednesday’s start of a new fiscal year. But to stay on track — and avoid a midweek government shutdown — members of the budget committees in the Assembly and Senate were called in for rare Sunday meetings, with agendas packed full of legislation.”

But to stay on track — and avoid a midweek government shutdown — members of the budget committees in the Assembly and Senate were called in for rare Sunday meetings, with agendas packed full of legislation.”

49

## ANDREW ZWICKER

STATE SENATOR, LD-16



The Princeton University-based plasma physics department outreach director, Zwicker brings a technocratic core intelligence to his assignments aboard Budget and Appropriations, Higher Education, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. A critical factor in the preservation of New Jersey public news.



# NICOLE RODRIGUEZ

PRESIDENT, NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE



Formerly NJPP’s research director, Rodriguez has guided the think tank’s policy agenda and supervised its research stab since 2019. A Boston native and former star at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Rodriguez says, “With democratic institutions and basic freedoms under attack in our nation’s halls of power, the need for community- driven policy has never been greater. We have a lot of work to do in building a state and economy that works for everyone, and I know that with this team we can get it done.” Part of that, she argues, is greater state protection for public news media. In an opinion piece on NJ.com, she wrote: “Federal support for public broadcasting is shrinking, and New Jersey PBS is undergoing a significant operational transition. The information landscape is more fragile than it has been in decades, and the communities with the least access to local news can least afford to lose more ground. This is a poor moment to abandon the state’s only program designed specifically to address the problem. The lawmakers who created the NJCIC made a commitment. Today’s Legislature inherited it. Letting it lapse because it was omitted from the governor’s proposal is not a policy decision — it is an abdication. Residents in 40% of the state’s communities already lack a local news outlet. The Legislature has a chance to keep that number from growing. It should take it.”



51

## STACI BERGER

PRESIDENT, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY NETWORK



Hardcore affordable housing activist Berger of Piscataway takes aim at all the wearying enemies of working-class people in search of a fair shake. She wants the codification of Mount Laurel to guarantee affordable housing in all of New Jersey's communities. She seeks rental assistance expansion aimed at protecting tenants and wants to evict eviction as a policy from the state of New Jersey. A movement progressive, Berger takes pride in having moved the affordable housing issue needle in this ongoing Democratic Primary season. "Rent," says Berger, "is just too damn high." In addition to diminishing people's quality of life, it's "preventing people from being homeowners."

52

## ELIZABETH COONER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NJ STATE POLICY LAB



Cooner conducts rigorous, nonpartisan research and analysis of policy issues facing the state with an eye toward equity and social justice, according to Rutgers. Formerly the Vice President of Social and Public Policy at Louis Harris & Associates, where she focused on policy issues related to health, well-being, and access to care.

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## PETER CHEN

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NEW JERSEY POLICY  
PERSPECTIVE



Chen serves as tax and budget lead, coordinating analysis of state and local fiscal policy. Expertise includes child and family policy advocacy in New Jersey since 2014. Most recently, according to NJPP, “he spearheaded New Jersey’s creation of a state-level Child Tax Credit. Chen’s work [includes] coordination of the statewide nonprofit Census complete count campaign, advocacy to strengthen state and local laws to protect children from lead exposure and reducing chronic absenteeism from school.” Previously Chen served as Policy Counsel for KIDS COUNT grantee Advocates for Children of New Jersey. Received his JD from Yale Law School and his Bachelors of Arts from Indiana University.



54

## BILL PASCRELL III

LOBBYIST, PRINCETON PUBLIC AFFAIRS



A partner at PPAG – Princeton Public Affairs Group in 1999, Pascrell has established himself as the state’s leading expert on all things related to the gaming industry – and cannabis. Son of the late legend from Paterson, U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell.

55

## AMY TORRES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW JERSEY ALLIANCE  
FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



Torres’ work takes on new and urgent relevance in the face of the Trump Administration’s mass deportations, private detention areas that operate above public scrutiny, and the dismantling of due process.



56

## RAJ PARIKH

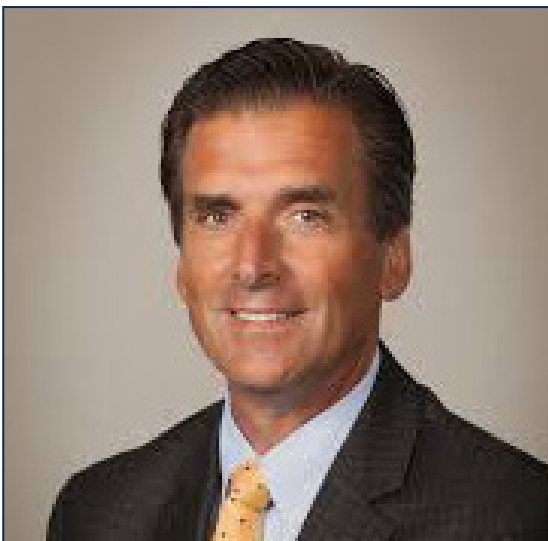
PARTNER, PEM LAW, LLP



Expert in commercial litigation matters, public financing, misappropriation of trade secrets, procurement, civil rights, construction, and, of course, election law.

57

## DENNIS HART

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHEMISTRY COUNCIL  
OF NEW JERSEY

With over four decades of environmental policy experience, the former NJDEP Assistant Commissioner is an expert on water infrastructure regulations and currently heads up the Chemistry Council of NJ.

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58

## STUART SHAPIRO

NJ STATE POLICY LAB



Permanent dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, Dr. Shapiro joined the school over two decades ago after receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard University and working for five years at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

59

## CATHERINE TUNG

SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR POLICY, OFFICE OF  
GOVERNOR MIKIE SHERRILL

Formerly of McCarter and English, Tung possesses a focus on economic development and recovery. Worked on the tax incentive bill designed to diversify EDA's economic development toolkit to support sustainable growth, as well as many business assistance bills to ensure small business wellbeing during and after the pandemic. Adjunct faculty member at Eagleton.



60

## STEVE BEATTY

PRESIDENT, NEW JERSEY EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION (NJEA)



A high school social studies teacher, Beatty priorities the social justice and labor mission of the organization. Expert in innovative curriculum development and implementation, especially in the arts.

61

## JANICE KOVACH

MAYOR OF CLINTON TOWN AND COMMISSIONER WITH  
THE NEW JERSEY MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION  
COMMISSION



Kovach goes back at the beginning as the on-the-ground leader to create more opportunities for film and television in the Garden State. How's the NJ film industry doing now? It's booming, with Lionsgate expanding and other new studios coming in and NetFlix's production thriving. "With all the crazy politics going on, I can escape to fantasy films and even horror," cracked avid film buff Kovach.



62

## A.J. SABATH

PRESIDENT AND CEO, AMG



Former labor commissioner under the late Gov. Richard J. Codey, former COS to Codey during the senate presidency years, Sabath is one of the Statehouse's strongest veteran players with a knack for policy in every discipline, especially labor.

63

## KRISTINE ALLEN AND CARY LOPEZ

ACT NOW FOUNDATION IN HUDSON COUNTY



Both excel at navigating the politics to further their policy goals – which in its own right is laudable – increasing Alzheimer's awareness, care, and funding. They combine policy chops with an on-the-ground understanding of the reality of the issue, advocating in the Statehouse, while caring directly for those afflicted patients, caretakers, and families.



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64

## GENE LEPORE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NJ ASSOCIATION  
OF STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NJASCU)



Assuming leadership of the NJASCU in 2020, Lepore works with seven key public colleges and universities in the State. Previously, he spent over 10 years in the Senate Majority Office, where he served as Deputy Executive Director and Director of Budget and Fiscal Analysis. He has become a go-to higher education policy expert for legislators, staffers, the executive branch, and members of the media since taking over NJASCU.

65

## SAM PESIN

PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF LIBERTY PARK



The ultimate local advocate for the wise use of public park land, Pesin works with the new Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to coordinate a master plan for his beloved Liberty State Park. Pesin supports small commercial development only for the park (vendors for kayaks, for example) not a golf course and auditorium or sports entertainment complex, and – critically – the protection of Caven Point.



66

## BRITTANY L. HOLOM-TRUNDY

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NJ POLICY PERSPECTIVE



The Princeton University PhD researcher and lecturer focuses on health care system reform, the differential impact of health policies across socioeconomic groups, and the role of social and cultural factors in the access to and use of health care services, as well as health outcomes, according to the New Jersey Policy Perspective.

67

## TARA COLTON

CHIEF ECONOMIC SECURITY OFFICER, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



Colton oversees over \$300 million in EDA dollars to alleviate food insecurity and eliminate food deserts, including the Food Desert Relief Act, Food Security Planning Grants, the Food Retail Innovation in Delivery Grant (FRIDG) and Sustain & Serve NJ.



68

## DOUG TOMSON

CEO OF NJ REALTORS



Leader of the largest trade association for real estate pros, Tomson was also appointed to the Governor's Economic Council. Former Mayor of Hillsborough.

69

## ED POTOSNAK

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
(DEP) COMMISSIONER



Potosnak, he says, wants to streamline the environmental permitting process, “so that government is responsive to job creators while safeguarding the state’s air, land, water and natural resources.” Formerly head of the League of Conservation Voters.

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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



70

## DAVID PASCRELL

CHAIR, GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS,  
GIBBONS PC



Lawyer and lobbyist Pascrell possesses government affairs expertise across a broad range, including finance and insurance, health and hospital, technology, utilities, development and construction, and public entities. Son of the late Paterson legend, U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell.

71

## LINDA GREENSTEIN

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE CHAIR



Attorney Greenstein – routinely celebrated by government groups for her ethical integrity – has legal expertise second to none in the New Jersey Legislature.



72

## DENA MOTTOLA JABORSKA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW JERSEY CITIZEN ACTION



At a time of diminished trustworthy media sources, in the Project 2025 era, with Donald Trump as President and a haggardly corrupt political establishment hanging on for dear life, Mottola Jaborska leads a staff of public-minded policy commandos. Jaborska had said that their advocacy and empowerment would focus on strategic planning concerning issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion – putting their work squarely in the sights of the Trump administration which is publicly opposed to such policies.

73

## ROY FREIMAN

ASSEMBLYMAN, LD-16



Chair of the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, Freiman avoids the nonsense that goes into many governmental decisions. Retired vice president of strategy and analytics for Prudential Financial.



74

## BILL CARUSO

PARTNER, ARCHER AND GREINER PC



Experienced government and political navigator, Caruso worked for both U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews and the late Speaker Sheila Oliver, where he developed a deep understanding of public policy. Equally adept on cannabis law and the state budget.

75

## GABRIELA SOTO

ACTIVIST



Nothing prepares you for going to war with power like an incarcerated spouse, which is where Soto finds herself, in the street outside Delaney Hall in Newark, where her husband, Martin, occupied a cell prior to getting transferred to Elizabeth.

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No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.



76

## JOE FIORDALISO

CEO, NORTHSTAR STRATEGIES



Fiordaliso directs firm and client strategies for this multi-practice boutique consultancy. The firm's government affairs practice represents clients on a multitude of issues with particular expertise on infrastructure matters. Fiordaliso also serves as President of the American Council of Engineering Companies, the trade association for the engineering industry.

77

## ALLISON LADD

DEPUTY MAYOR/DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC  
AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CITY  
OF NEWARK



Expert in Real Estate Finance, Affordable Housing, Policy Analysis, Economic Development, and Real Estate Development. Critical in the development of the Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective at 505 Clinton Avenue.



78

## CARMEN MORALES

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP, NJ GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee, the very grounded Morales – schooled politically and governmentally at the North Ward Center of Newark – has policy expertise in areas relating to food access, higher education funding formulation, student financial aid, and measures to help vulnerable immigrants maintain driving privileges.

79

## DAN SMITH

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, 1868 PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Former Senior Advisor to New Jersey General Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Smith specializes in legislative affairs for corporate and government organizations.



80

## MICHAEL FELD

DIRECTOR, CENTRAL MANAGEMENT UNIT, OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES



The longtime director manages approximately 150 professional and administrative staff who provide nonpartisan staff support services to the New Jersey Legislature.

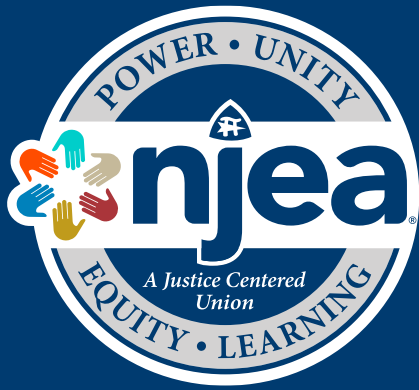
81

## KAITLYN WOJTOWICZ

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD ACTION FUND OF NEW JERSEY



With deep policy knowledge in all areas pertinent to Planned Parenthood and experience in grant writing, marketing, medical services, education and finance, Wojtowicz comes to the work prepared.



**The members of the**  
**New Jersey Education Association**  
**are proud advocates for our colleagues,**  
**our students, and America's**  
**BEST PUBLIC**  
**SCHOOLS**

*Pictured above (l-r):*

Secretary-Treasurer Tina Dare, President Steve Beatty & Vice President Petal Robertson



82

## RICHARD HENNING

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE  
NEW JERSEY UTILITIES ASSOCIATION



Henning provides strategic direction and sets policy for NJUA members and represents utilities in various political and governmental activities in the State of New Jersey, according to the NJUA. “This would include legislative, executive, administrative, and regulatory state governmental operations.” The New Jersey Utilities Association announced earlier this year the election to the Board of Directors of Andrew Hendry, regional president of Atlantic City Electric, and Teresa Reed, vice president, finance and regulatory for JCP&L.

83

## MARLEINA UBEL

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NJ POLICY PERSPECTIVE



According to NJ Policy Perspective, Ubel “researches the criminal legal system with a focus on alternatives to policing that center restorative justice. Previously, [she] was NJPP’s 2020- 2021 Kathleen Crotty Fellow where she analyzed the state budget process and researched public spending on state and local law enforcement.”



84

## MARY MELFI

HUNTERDON COUNTY CLERK



Deeply involved in all aspects of voting and voter protection. A critical leader in maintaining community and policy preparedness among the state's constitutional officers, especially the clerks.

85

## ERIN K. REAGAN

POLICY ANALYST, N.J. ASSEMBLY MAJORITY OFFICE



The PhD advises Democrats on technology and energy policy, with a specialty in vaccine and infectious disease.



86

## PRISCILLA GARCES

ACTIVIST AND PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, FAMILIES, AND PEACE



Board Member of Lupe Fund, member of the Women's Federation for World Peace, public policy diehard Garces has traveled the world to deepen her understanding of the ways in which New Jersey can better the lives of people with disabilities.

87

## AMY MANSUE

PRESIDENT AND CEO, CHILDREN'S SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL



Former Executive Vice President and Chief Experience Officer for RWJBarnabas Health and President, Southern Region, RWJBarnabas Health; President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Specialized Hospital; and Chief Strategy Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Health System. Experienced.



# HPAE

AFT / AFL-CIO

## CONGRATULATIONS

to the 2026 Insider 100 Policymakers



HPAE is the largest union of registered nurses and health care professionals in New Jersey. Since its founding by Englewood Hospital nurses in 1974, HPAE has expanded across the state and into Southeastern Pennsylvania representing more than 15,000 nurses, social workers, therapists, technicians, medical researchers, and other health care professionals in hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, blood banks, and university research facilities. HPAE is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

 [HPAE.org](http://HPAE.org)



88

## ERIC DOBSON

STRATEGIC CONSULTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE FAIR SHARE HOUSING CENTER



A major lowkey force, ordained minister Dobson possesses deep powers of coalition building, the result of interfaith outreach.

89

## DEB CORNAVACA

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, NEW JERSEY  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



Formerly Deputy Chief of Stab for Gov. Phil Murphy, Cornavaca possesses a particular expertise in labor unions and advocacy organization issues.



90

## GABE NEVILLE

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL, OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES



A legislative staffer for two decades, Neville served as Deputy/Associate/Senior Counsel in the Central Management Unit, and as Senior/Assistant Legislative Counsel in the Office of Legislative Counsel. Appointed to his current post three years ago, the legislative counsel provides professional, nonpartisan staff support services to the Legislature and its officers, members, committees, and commissions. A graduate of Queens University of Charlotte and Temple University's Beasley School of Law.

91

## DAN HARRIS

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR FOR SPEAKER CRAIG COUGHLIN



Harris possesses real world grounding as an at-large member of the Woodbridge Town Council. Critical in the development of StayNJ, and a vital part of the Speaker's efforts to strike a budget balancing act come crunch time.



92

## JANICE FULLER

PRINCETON PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Formerly of Anbaric Development Partners, the former chair of the Redistricting Commission and Chief-of-Staff to U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone joined the powerful lobbying firm last year, arming PPAG with another weapon.

93

## CHRIS DURKIN

ESSEX COUNTY CLERK



Consummate professional Durkin possesses considerable election oversight experience and is a resource for fellow constitutional officers. Look for Durkin to be among those clerks who will work on campaigns and elections reforms in the aftermath of Andy Kim's detonation of the county party line.



94

## AL KOMJATHY AND EILEEN KEAN

MANAGING PARTNER AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,  
KOMJATHY & KEAN LLC



Expert, experienced Trenton-based lobbying team with expertise in public affairs, crisis management, government affairs, regulatory affairs, and association management.

95

## MARJORIE KAPLAN

SENIOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE RUTGERS  
CLIMATE AND ENERGY INSTITUTE



According to Rutgers, Kaplan operates “at the nexus of environmental science, natural resources, and human and ecological health within federal and state programs, for a major utility, two international consulting firms and academia.”



96

## JANELLEN DUFFY

LOBBYIST, RIVER CROSSING STRATEGY



Having worked for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and as Education Policy Advisor and Director of Policy for Governor Jon Corzine, Duffy carries heavyweight credentials into her work in Trenton.

97

## STEVE PETER

SOMERSET COUNTY CLERK



President of the Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey (COANJ). Expert on the unbracketing process. Speaks five languages. Election law expert. As President of COANJ, he's had his hands on everything related to Clerks, Recorders, Sheriffs, and Surrogates, working with their lobbyist on legislation. Gov. Phil Murphy named him to the re-opening working group as we came out of COVID.



# AMI KACHALIA

ACLU-NJ SENIOR POLICY STRATEGIST



Experienced. Formerly of the Drug Policy Alliance in Trenton, NJ, where she executed state-wide policy advocacy campaigns on criminal justice and public health issues related to drugs, including pretrial justice, parole reform, marijuana legalization, civil asset forfeiture reform, harm reduction, and access to treatment. Also served at The Fund for New Jersey as a philanthropy fellow and program associate, where she conducted grantmaking to organizations advocating for progressive social and economic policy in New Jersey.



# PAULA SOLLAMI COVELLO

MERCER COUNTY CLERK



Attorney, now serving her fifth term as clerk. Deep government experience. Formerly Policy Advisor in the NJ Governor's Office and in the New Jersey Department of Education, serving as the first Executive Director of the New Jersey School Ethics Commission, and in the Department's Controversies & Disputes office writing legal opinions. This year, the U.S. Department of State, the agency that reviews and regulates passport offices throughout the U.S.A, awarded a perfect score for handling passport applications and renewals, to the Mercer County Clerk's Office. Said County Clerk Sollami Covello, "I'm so proud of my staff [in Trenton and Hamilton] for their unwavering dedication. It's clear that this isn't just a job for them as they display a commitment to serving the community efficiently and accurately every day." The consistent excellence means that residents in and around Trenton can rely on a top-notch experience when applying for or renewing their passports."



# LOUIS DIPAOLO

VICE PRESIDENT, NEW JERSEY POLICY  
PERSPECTIVE



Formerly Legislative Director for the New Jersey Working Families Alliance and a Dumont councilman, DiPaolo occupies a critical messaging role in the development of progressive policies in his home state. Critical this past season in the movement of the “Make Polluters Pay” Act.