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POWER 100 LIST

2026



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INSIDERNJ 2026 EDITION

Welcome

to the Insider 100 Power List



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Every InsiderNJ Power List has a theme mostly conditioned by the immediately preceding general election contest. This year's list proves no exception, although this time what follows probably possesses *three* distinct themes.

The first overriding theme does indeed proceed from the Nov. 3rd election and as such you will find the key names of those and their blue wave allies who helped puncture President Donald Trump's grip on national power. At the top of that list stands Rebecca Bennett, the retired Navy helicopter pilot who dethroned Trump ally incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom Kean, Jr. (R-7). If Bennett – herself a former Texas Republican – came across in the election as a moderate – her fellow 2026 victor Dr. Adam Hamawy in the 12th District – ran with considerable progressive energy behind him coming out of the primary season. He's on the list. You'll find some other names, too, connected to fellow U.S. Rep.-elect Zack Mullock, who ousted another Trump ally, Jeff Van Drew, in CD-2. Mullock himself does not appear here since the list, as always, does not include elected officials (or, for that matter, former governors or judges).

The second theme of this year's list anticipates the 2028 presidential contest. In New Jersey we have several people interested in succeeding Trump, and they include – but probably aren't limited to

– former Governor Chris Christie, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, and sitting Governor Mikie Sherrill. An unsuccessful 2020 contender for the presidency, Booker is gearing up with obvious zest. You will find on the power list those critical support players toward a Booker presidential run (not all of them, but some key people). Sherrill, too, has avidly campaigned outside of New Jersey for those who made up the historic blue wave against Trump. Christie, for his part, wants to lead the conversation about how to rebuild a Trump-decimated Republican Party. We don't know how much influence he can wield in that regard, as the former U.S. Attorney proved a very willing ally of Trump's at that outset back in 2016. The hunch here based on the election results is that most people want to move on entirely from the Trump trainwreck.

Speaking of Sherrill, if there is a third theme on this list – and there is – it incorporates the extraordinary first year in office of the Governor and her administration. From the horrors of Delaney Hall, to the Division of Motor Vehicle voter registration debacle, the ongoing legal battles with the Trump Administration, the transportation challenges around the World Cup, and a first budget in which Sherrill negotiated with Legislative Leadership, the former Navy helicopter pilot (the other helicopter pilot in New Jersey, not to be confused with Rebecca Bennett) had a pretty packed year of decision-making, crises, and thorny political situations with which to contend. The list heavily weighs those players close to Sherrill who contributed significantly to the Governor's thinking and finally rendered judgment.

We hope you enjoy it and take something constructive from it, and we will certainly see you on the trail as New Jersey gears up for legislative primary elections in June of 2027 when all 120 seats are up for grabs.

In the meantime, as always, we will see you in Atlantic City at this year's annual League of Municipalities.



Max Pizarro

Editor-in-Chief

Thank you to all of our partners who part of the 2026 Power Package series:

- Associated Builders and Contractors - New Jersey
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—Pete, Insider NJ General Manager

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Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#1 Alex Ball

The head of Governor Sherrill's inner sanctum operates on her boss's behalf with considerable authority. Constitutionally, New Jersey has the most powerful governorship in the country, and Ball seems aware of that fact as she serves a military minded chief executive. Deficit challenges from behind left hundreds of millions of debt.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#2 Mike Hellstrom

The Laborers' top man has strong New York operational ties, a forward position with the Governor's Office on all labor issues, and an increasingly important position within the New Jersey Building Trades organization.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#3 Leroy Jones

County party organizations still exist, of course, and as chair of the Essex County Dems – Jones will find his club tested next year as at no other time in his long and distinguished tenure. With the vaunted party line eradicated from the primary ballot, can establishment incumbents stave off self-professed progressive candidates in the same county that powered Analilia Mejia to victory this year? We'll find out next June.



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#4 Jason Hedberg

A financial guy with strong military credentials, New Jersey's first gentleman projects strength as Mikie Sherrill's partner and chief overseer of her support system.

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#5 Jennifer Davenport

New Jersey's top cop served the Governor well in her first year on the job, effectively suing the Trump Administration to keep the Gateway Tunnel project going, and maintaining an active partnership with other states to engage the courts to intervene on multiple Trump Administration infractions, especially in the area of civil rights.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#6 Charlie Wowkanech

Look for the labor boss – head of a million strong union members in both the private and public sectors – to continue to play a significant public policy role as New Jersey grapples with laws to properly direct artificial intelligence for human – and not machine – ends. As always, he will be aided by Laurel Brennan, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO since 1997, and the first woman to serve in this office in New Jersey and one of only seven to do so across the nation.


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to Rudy Garcia
and this year's
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#7 Rebecca Bennett

The retired Navy helicopter pilot and Bridgewater mom of two daughters never appeared to really break a sweat in her successful effort to give Tom Kean, Jr. the heave ho out of office in the 7th Congressional District. Granted, Kean may have been the state's worst congressional candidate in recent memory, but Bennett proved especially agile in capitalizing on a dreadful GOP implosion of Trump agony and Kean incompetence.

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#8 Kellie Doucette

Former District Director for then-Congresswoman Sherrill, Doucette serves as one of the Governor's critical, trusted advisors. Strongly footed with her healthcare background to aid Sherrill as the administration grapples with the monster of a public healthcare contract.

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#9 Donna Barber

In the aftermath of the LG's evaporation, the veteran executive director of the New Jersey Division of Elections assured clerks and by extension voters of a safe and secure 2026 elections process.

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#10 Ana Maria Hill

Following a strong 2025 in which her union helped power Sherrill's general election ground game, the labor leader had an excellent 2026. Hill was one of the most obvious Mejia allies in CD-11, leading her members on the doors to propel their candidate to victory. She also plays an active Trenton role, particularly engaged now as lawmakers craft legislation to equip uber drivers with the ability to unionize.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#11 Kris Kolluri

The President & CEO of NJ TRANSIT and the Executive Director of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority supplied authoritative leadership during the 2026 World Cup as New Jersey safely received and transported the world's soccer population.

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#12 Sean Higgins

The Chief Spokesperson and Senior Advisor for Governor Mikie Sherrill combines urbanity, strong communications skills, and excellent researching ability.

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#13 Shirley Emehelu

Formerly the executive assistant attorney general, Emehelu – with a critical midterm election approaching – adroitly stepped in to serve as New Jersey's acting secretary of state after Dala Caldwell resigned. Ahead of a Nov. 9th deadline, Governor Sherrill subsequently chose Emehelu to replace Caldwell as the state's lieutenant governor.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#14 Charlie Stile

If very few people read anymore and prefer posting pictures of food over literary endeavors, then Stile – the state's most elegant writer – must be the Victor Hugo of New Jersey. Pick any political issue. If you take the time to read Stile's columns, you will uniquely educate yourself. Look at the pieces he wrote at the height of the CD-12 Democratic Primary, and you will see what I mean. Gems.

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#15 Amol Sinha

Sinha has proved an especially engaged and well-prepared defender of civil liberties in New Jersey as the Trump Administration wages war against worker immigrants.

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#16 Eddie Donnelly

Having announced his retirement from the NJ Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) earlier this fall, President Donnelly remains on the job through the new year and in a command position for the next chapter as one of the state's most influential labor leaders. Close to Governor Sherrill.

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#17 Tim Lydon

Chief Counsel to Governor Mikie Sherrill, Lydon – with a deep background of Trenton experience, contacts, and relationships – has emerged on staff nearly one year in as Sherrill's most seasoned legislative liaison.

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#18 John Currie

The North Jersey party leader – a former state party chairman – did a good job this year, first staring down a progressive attack against the organization in the Democratic Primary and then warding off what turned out to be a ludicrous attempt by the GOP to take out incumbent U.S. Rep. Nellie Pou (D-9).

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#19 Patricia Zita

Leader of her own lobbying firm and longtime agile denizen of the Capital hallways, the Trenton insider specializes in the mastery of complex subjects.

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#20 James Gee

Described by insiders as the ultimate lobbyist of "the New Left," Gee proved a strong advisor to U.S. Rep. Analila Mejia. Former chief of staff to retiring U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, the Trenton diehard excels at the crossroads of state and federal government and politics.

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#21 Jacqueline Suarez

Governor Sherrill's Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, Suarez – retained from the Murphy Administration – is widely regarded as one of the most powerful – and visible - cabinet members.

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

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#22 Mike Delamater

Former Phil Murphy frontline operator, Delamater of CLB Partners has emerged in the Governor Sherrill era as one of Trenton's leading young lobbyists. Prime time.

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#23 Balpreet Grewal-Virk

Commissioner and Chair of the Gateway Development Commission and Senior Vice President, Community Health, for RWJBarnabas Health, Grewal-Virk helms the bi-state public authority and government sponsored authority empowered to facilitate and coordinate the multi-billion Gateway Tunnel.

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#24 Raj Parikh

Partner at PEM Law. Leader of the New Jersey bar, with expertise as a litigator, crisis manager and counselor. Experience trying high stakes litigation cases related to commercial litigation matters, public financing, misappropriation of trade secrets, procurement, civil rights, and construction. Firm includes Avi Kelin.

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#25 Maggie Moran

PRovoke Media awarded Moran's boutique strategic communications and advocacy firm, Moxie Strategies, its Global New Agency of the Year for 2026, a top honor for new agencies worldwide. It comes just months after PRovoke named Moxie the Best New Agency in North America, and less than three years after the firm opened its doors with a handful of people and one big idea.

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#26 Kevin McCabe

Middlesex remains arguably the best organized and drama free county in the state, wired through Speaker Craig Coughlin to the engine room of the state capital. But we'll see next year when the entire governing body faces reelection and McCabe will again have a chance to prove his organization's strength.

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#27 Dale Florio

Head of New Jersey's most successful lobbying firm, Princeton Public Affairs Group, Florio is the ultimate basketball coach as lobbyist leader, having molded one of the best teams in the business.

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#28 Larry Hamm

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck has his hero, Tom Joad, say, "Wherever there's a cop beating up a guy, I'll be there." That's like Hamm, only in this case, Trump's masked and armed ICE agents aren't cops so much as just straight-up thugs. Hamm this year – unsurprisingly – has been active on that front, while working hard to educate urban voters about voting rights.

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#29 Jen Holdsworth

Chair of Mission to Deliver, the fundraising PAC in support of Mikie Sherrill. Critical political point of contact for the Governor as Sherrill stretches national tentacles.

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#30 The DeCotiises

Headquartered in Paramus with over 50 attorneys, Decotiis FitzPatrick and Cole LLP built a profile as one of the top firms in the state of New Jersey, a leader in the state's government, legal, and business communities. Joe, Sr. now serves as the sole managing partner, continuing the strong legacy of his father at this intergenerational operation. The firm includes powerhouse lawyer Arlene Quinones Perez, veteran expert in government affairs and municipal law, and consummate insider Bill Harla.

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#31 Jeannine LaRue

A partner at award-winning public strategies firm Moxie. Close advisor to Governor Sherrill. Trenton-based friend to many. Host of the popular LaRuelist Café, a live-streamed community podcast.

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#32 Mo Butler and Mike Soliman

The well-connected principals at Mercury. Former state director of U.S. Senator Cory Booker (Butler), with strong ties in Newark and Essex County, including the North Ward. Also, Chairman of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA). Watch for Butler to play a key role for Booker as New Jersey's senior senator intensifies his 2028 presidential campaign schedule. Soliman: Former state director for former U.S. Senator Bob Menendez and former Gottheimer for Governor advisor with strong Hudson and Bergen ties.

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#33 Middy Baraka

Second most powerful man in Brick City, Chief of staff to his brother, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, and a politically savvy operator with statewide political reach.

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#34 Akeem Cunningham

Executive Director of the Essex County Democratic Committee – an ex-football player and firefighter by trade who now works at the Department of Community Affairs – Cunningham carries competitive fire into all his political work. Close to Governor Sherrill.

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#35 Veronica Duron

Chief-of-staff to Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), newly elected to another six-year term and positioned for a 2028 presidential run.

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#36 Paul Juliano

The chairman of the Bergen County Democratic Committee remains one of the strongest – and politically deft – chairs, a consequence of his considerable people skills.

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#37 Peg Schaffer

Long-serving chair of the Somerset County Democratic Committee, ground zero for Rebecca Bennett's CD-7 victory over Tom Kean. Jr. Vice chair of the Democratic State Committee.

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#38 Bill Pascrell III

Veteran player and attorney at PPAG, Pascrell – son of the late U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell – is the state's undisputed gaming policy expert.

While we can't predict the future, let's celebrate our accomplishments this year...

Congratulations to all the honorees on the List!



David Parano
Parano & Associates

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#39 Bill Mullen

President of the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council. While serving as Senate President, Steve Sweeney obviously enhanced the statewide power of the Building Trades. They became the premier political operation in the state. Under Mullen's leadership, they remain a very well-organized group, very politically active, both civilly and financially. With or without Sweeney, the Trades don't look to get knocked from their perch anytime soon. President of the powerful labor organization for 15 years, Mullen received the support last year from his brothers and sisters for another three-year term.

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#40 Paul Fishman

Lawyer for Arnold and Porter. Former U.S. Attorney for New Jersey, appointed by President Barack Obama. Now the attorney for U.S. Rep. LaMonica McIver (D-10) as she fights charges related to her intervention last year with ICE agents on behalf of her friend and ally Newark Mayor Ras Baraka.

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#41 Kevin Jarvis

Son of a unionized Vineland glass worker, labor lawyer and prior chief-of-staff at the Department of Labor, NJ Acting Labor Commissioner Jarvis came to the job – perhaps unsurprisingly – recommended by the Laborers. Expert in contract negotiations, grievances and arbitration hearings, Unfair Labor Practice matters and Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) litigation, the Seton Hall and Rutgers-educated lawyer served as partner with the Firm of O'Brien, Belland & Bushinsky.



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#42 Tom Barrett

A fantastic combination of urbanity, street smarts and political savoir-faire, Barrett still finds himself way ahead of the political pack on every front, while delightfully in it, as always. Composer of InsiderNJ's highly popular Irish Americans list and organizer of the annual Ray Durkin Memorial celebration.

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#43 Steve Beatty

First year President of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), Beatty oversees nearly 200,000 active members and has traveled to hundreds of school buildings in his quest to make contact, not only with his members, but with the people they serve, the children and families of the Garden State.

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#44 Om Savargaonkar

Having served on the campaign staff of Mikie Sherrill's successful 2025 statewide campaign, Savargaonkar transitioned to Rebecca Bennett's campaign as her CD-7 campaign manager. Bennett braved the primary – a difficult task given the surging progressive movement – then flattened Kean in the general – all with the unflappable Savargaonkar at her side.

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#45 Ed Oatman and Nick Fixmer

Union County Democratic Party diehards. Respectively the county manager and political consultant present one-two punch negotiating and organizing capacity on behalf of sitting Senate President Nick Scutari.

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#46 Steve Adubato, Jr.

The former Assemblyman leads the state as New Jersey's most substantive interpreter of public policy.

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#47 Patricia Campos-Medina

A Research-Teaching-Extension (RTE) Faculty and labor educator, activist/educator Campos-Medina focuses on the intersection of race, immigration status, and workers' rights. The Jersey diehard serves as Executive Director of the Worker Institute at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, where she leads research, policy innovation, and training to advance worker justice, collective bargaining rights, and the interests of workers in today's economy and society.



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#48 Idida Rodriguez

Partner at 1868 Public Affairs. Expert operator, Rodriguez has statewide ties everywhere and is especially close to U.S. Rep. Nellie Pou (D-9).

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#49 Christine Sloan

Veteran Emmy Award-winning reporter, Sloan covers New Jersey for CBS News. Active this year covering families torn apart by ICE at Delaney Hall. Excellent on-the-ground public servant. Formerly of InsiderNJ.



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#50 Michele Siekerka

New Jersey Business and Industry Association President Siekerka persistently, uncompromisingly defends the NJ business community's interests in a state fraught with high corporate taxes and legislative challenges. Reflecting on her home state's ranking as least competitive in the region for business costs and taxes for the eighth consecutive year, according to an NJBIA 2026 Regional Business Climate Analysis, "This is why it's time for a true reform agenda in New Jersey," said Siekerka. "...It's time to immediately pivot to a comprehensive process to break down these barriers to job growth. That can only happen through a much-needed proactive reform agenda."

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#51 Karen Kominsky

CLB government affairs professional with more than 30 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. 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. Her primary focus was managing legislative affairs for both governors.

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#52 Tom Bracken

President, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Bracken (along with Siekerka) serves as the state's leading business advocate, and proponent of a stronger state economy through implementation of the Chamber's Plan for an Affordable New Jersey. "With Gov. Mikie Sherrill's signing of New Jersey's record-setting $60.7 billion Fiscal Year 2027 budget, another budget cycle has come to a close," Bracken said in response to the budget season. "It's now time to look ahead and begin to focus on the state's most pressing need: strengthening our economy. Attention should turn to advancing policies that encourage investment, promote growth and improve New Jersey's long-term competitiveness, all of which have been virtually ignored for way too long."

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#53 Aaron Binder

State Treasurer for the State of New Jersey, Binder helped Governor Sherrill thread a budget needle this year that included a compromised reduction in the income threshold for New Jerseyans to qualify for the popular STAYNJ tax relief program.

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Director of Government & External Relations

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#54 Phil Alagia

Chief-of-staff to Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo, Alagia possesses one of the most capable political minds in the state of New Jersey. Integral to the success story of Essex County First.

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#55 Charles Boyer

Pastor, Greater Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church and Co-founder of Salvation and Social Justice. Always politically active, Boyer served as a critical point of contact for candidates running in the 12th District Democratic Primary. Crucial on black justice issues.

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#56 Martin and Gabriella Soto

Immigrant worker dad Martin Soto's trip to pick up a box of diapers for his kid led to ICE bum-rushing him and tossing him in Delaney Hall. Pregnant with the couple's next child, Gabriella led the public charge to get her husband freed. Working with activists, elected officials, and the media, her efforts paid off and the feds – humiliated – let wrongly incarcerated family man Martin out of the Elizabeth detention facility where they had transferred him. The Sotos case again exposed a cruel, corrupt and stupid Trump Administration immigration policy, which targets and upends innocent families. Thankfully, this story had a happy ending. Most don't.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#57 Julie Diaz

Formerly of SEIU and Assemblywoman Annette Quijano's office, and a veteran of the Labor Department during the turbulent period of COVID, labor expert Diaz serves as a key ally to Commissioner Jarvis while the Sherrill Administration addresses difficult labor issues statewide.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#58 Adam Malamut

Firm managing partner, Malamut and Associates. Intelligent, Burlington-based operator with strong connective ties countywide and throughout the bloodstream of New Jersey Democratic Party establishment politics and government affairs.

Congratulations Team PPAG

InsiderNJ Power List



Dale Florio



Bill Pascrell III

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Winning Strategies Washington

PPAG
Princeton Public Affairs Group

PSC
Princeton Strategic Communications

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#59 William Sproule

Executive Secretary Treasurer, Regional Council of Carpenters for the Eastern Atlantic States. Diehard South Jerseyan. Represents six states and 43,000 carpenters, including 15,000 in New Jersey. An apprentice carpenter in 1989, Sproule worked his way up through the ranks to hold various leadership roles within the organization, including Organizing Director, New Jersey Regional Manager, and President and Regional Manager of the Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters. Took over the restructured Carpenters' organization in 2018-2019. In charge of day-to-day operations for the Council's local unions, overseeing collective bargaining agreements.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#60 Hannah Mori

State Director, United States Senator Cory Booker, Mori this year played a critical role on behalf of the 2028 Presidential candidate as he easily won reelection to another six-year U.S. Senate term.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#61 Ronald Slaughter

Pastor, Saint James AME Church in Newark. Vice-Chair of the New Jersey State Parole Board. A strong voice on social justice issues and leading NJ advocate on black working class issues.



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#62 Joshua Hodes

The NJ PSI partner carries a formidable resume, with almost 2 decades of experience representing clients. Chair of the NJ Educational Facilities Authority since 2010, former advisor to Hillary Clinton, Hodes maintains deep political ties on the national, state, and local levels. He served as CoS to the Assembly Leader and maintains strong advocacy work. With expertise in a wide field and diverse clients, he is a key figure in the Garden State.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#63 Eric Richard

Legislative Affairs Coordinator, NJ AFL-CIO. With nearly 25 years of experience, Richard serves as the mammoth organization's veteran point person on legislation impacting working people. Respected and sought after as one of the state's leading labor experts.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#64 Adam Hamawy

In a big field of competitors without a county party line, the retired Army surgeon ran the best campaign. A natural ally of outgoing U.S. Rep. Watson Coleman – whose set Hamaway will occupy – Hamaway will face a 2028 test in the event that his rivals decide to get behind one person to challenge him. Or maybe Hamawy – a hero based on his work in Middle East warzones – will simply prove too much to handle once he gains a D.C. toehold.

Congratulations to
Max Pizarro and InsiderNJ.com
on another successful year!



Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.,
Essex County Executive

Putting Essex County First

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#65 Angelo Genova

Distinguished campaigns and elections lawyer at Genova Burns – the premiere elections l aw authority in the State of New Jersey. Firm includes Nick Amato and William Megna.

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#66 Theo Siggelakis

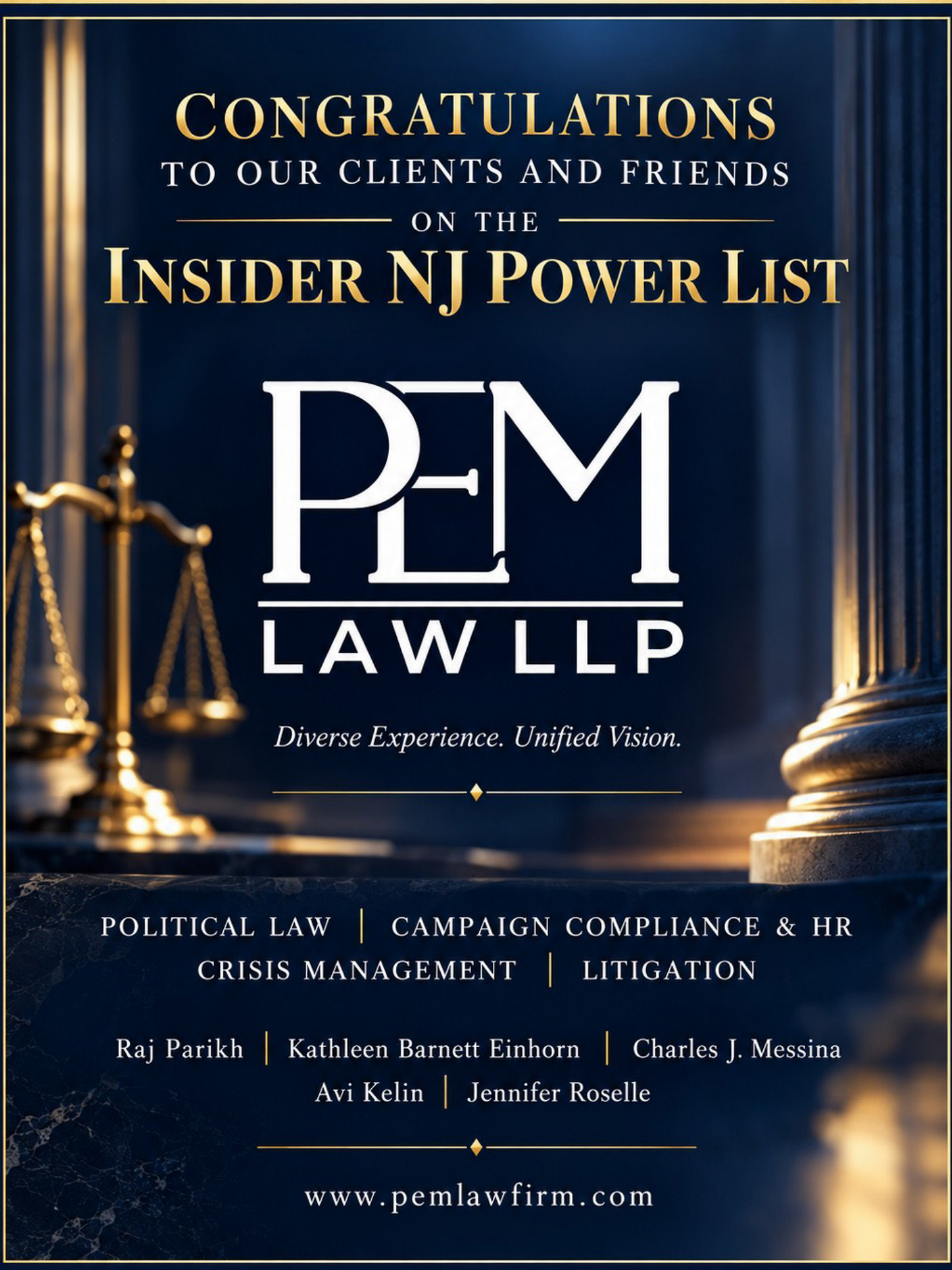
Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs for Mercer County in the government of County Executive Dan Benson. Formerly Benson's legislative aide.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#67 Fatima Heyward

President, New Jersey Young Democrats of America. A dynamic, galvanizing presence, Heyward made history as the first New Jerseyan to win the position, the first woman in a decade, and only the second Black woman since the organization's founding in 1932 to hold the title.


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#68 David Pascrell

Chair for government and regulatory affairs at Gibbons PC. A lobbyist with considerable experience in Trenton and Washington, D.C. Areas of expertise include finance and insurance, health and hospital, technology, utilities, development and construction, and public entities.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#69 Sammy Gonzalez

The North Ward Democratic Party chairman, Gonzalez holds on his shoulders the local political organizing tradition of the late Steve Adubato, Sr. Married to powerhouse state Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29), and politically close to DiVincenzo COS Alagia, North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos and Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo.

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#70 Anthony Abrantes

Assistant Executive Secretary Treasurers, the Carpenters. Works directly under Sproule in the administration of all Carpenter duties in New Jersey as part of the union's six-state, 43K-strong effort. Serves 15,000 members in the Garden State. Involved in the development of three carpenter training centers, including a dive school, which instructs members in underwater construction.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#71 Greg Lalevee

Business Manager, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825. A crane operator by trade, Lalevee became business manager of the 7K-strong men and women in 2010. Trusted and respected.

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SCAN TO VISIT

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#72 Michele Liebtag

CWA Local 1036, Political and Education Director and President of the Mercer County Central Labor Council, Liebtag helps members build political power, advocate for fairness, and advance issue-based campaigns across New Jersey. She has spent decades successfully championing landmark legislation like Family Leave Insurance, Earned Sick Leave, and Equal Pay. Liebtag also serves as Frenchtown Borough Council President and Vice Chair of the Hunterdon County Democratic Committee, bringing a collaborative and action-oriented approach to labor advocacy, public service, and community leadership.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#73 Nedia Morsey

Executive Director of Make the Road NJ. Brilliant, consummate advocate for immigrant rights and undocumented worker rights, the lifelong New Jerseyan came up the organizing way with Make the Road. Critical in the frontline fight to shut down Delaney Hall.

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#74 Andy Cassagnol

Executive Vice President of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. Under Cassagnol's leadership, 1199 backed Analilia Mejia early in CD-11 to nab a win. He was also part of the "Meeting the Moment" labor coalition, which led cross-union Know Your Rights trainings for immigrant workers, and supported the Labor Eyes on ICE coalition to raise awareness of human rights abuses at Delaney Hall.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#75 Jenny Davis

Chief of Staff to powerful Hudson County Executive Craig Guy (chair of the Hudson County Democratic Committee). Experienced. Former chief of intergovernmental affairs for the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and former deputy executive director of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee.

Congratulations

TO THE

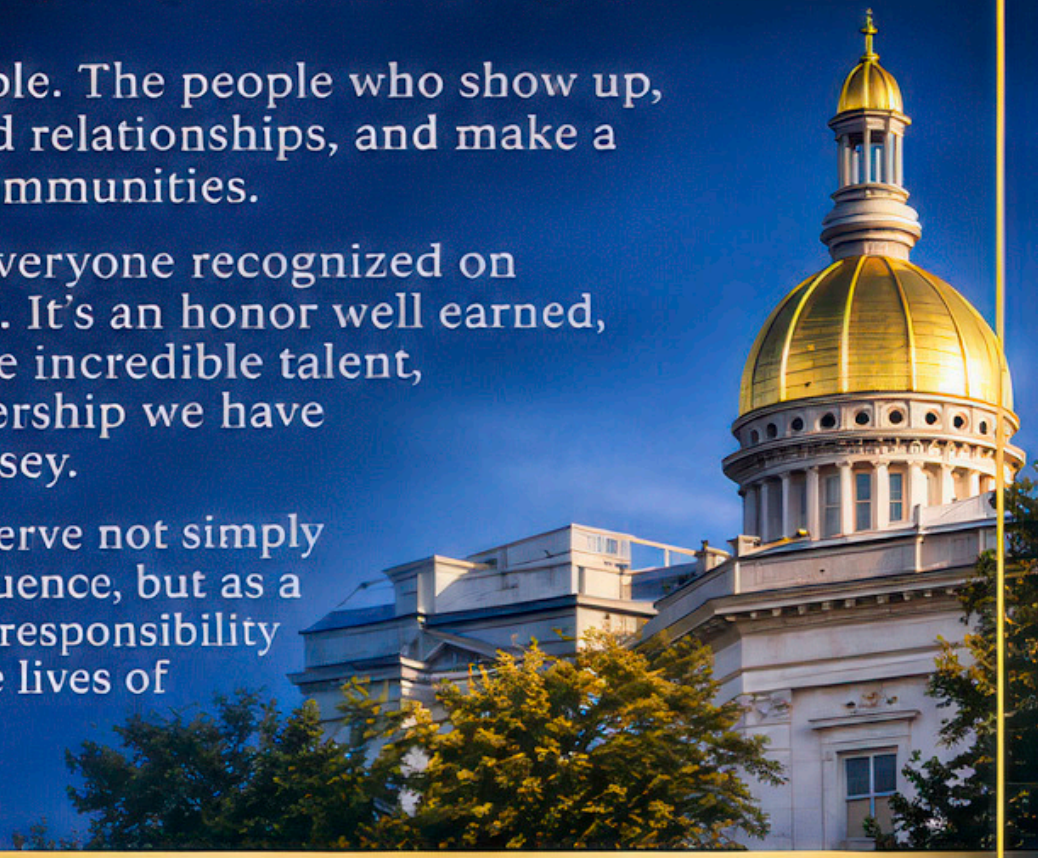
2026 POWER LIST

HONOREES!

Politics is about people. The people who show up, put in the work, build relationships, and make a difference in their communities.

Congratulations to everyone recognized on this year's *Power List*. It's an honor well earned, and a reminder of the incredible talent, dedication, and leadership we have right here in New Jersey.

May this recognition serve not simply as a celebration of influence, but as a reminder of our shared responsibility to use it to improve the lives of those we serve.



AKEEM CUNNINGHAM

Essex County Democratic Committee
Executive Director

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#76 Iris Delgado

Executive Director of the Middlesex County Democratic Organization. A vital political player for Middlesex, which occupies one of the stronger positions statewide both in the operations of statewide elections and backroom Trenton ops.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.





#77 Keith Furlong and Mark Albiez

Respectively a top-notch hand, veteran of numerous political wars, especially in Passaic, where County Democratic Chairman John Currie relies on him; and an excellent, experienced operative, with deep political ties in North Jersey, especially Hudson, where he cut his teeth as chief-of-staff to Union City Mayor (and 33rd District State Senator) Brian P. Stack.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM *WINS!*

This month, New Jersey voters, along with voters across the country, made their voices abundantly clear: we demand representatives who will fight for our right to reproductive freedom. Across the state, Planned Parenthood Action Fund-endorsed candidates saw huge wins: in January, our state will be sending eleven supporters of reproductive freedom to Congress.

As we look toward 2027 and beyond, we're committed to continuing the work of advocating for reproductive freedom, protecting access to essential health care, and making sure the voices of New Jerseyans are heard at every level of government.



Congratulations to our new and returning champions in Congress, and all the advocates for reproductive health care on the InsiderNJ Power 100 list.

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#78 Gene Mulroy and Gerry Gibbs

The CIG Team. Bipartisan former public officials, agency professionals, and communications experts with decades of experience across all levels of government.

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#79 Dave Parano

CEO, Parano and Associates. The vote-by-mail operations guru cut his teeth with former state Senator Loretta Weinberg and remains the chief Democratic Party operative most institutionally grounded in Bergen County, but with expertise everywhere.

EDUCATION | RESOURCES | ADVOCACY | NETWORKING | EVENTS







NJAA is Home to New Jersey!

The New Jersey Apartment Association is the premier statewide organization representing all facets of the multifamily rental housing industry, advancing the success and professionalism of its membership through government affairs advocacy, education, training, and industry events.

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#80 Chris Donnelly

Oversees the day-to-day operations of Avoq's Asbury Park location. Former secretary to State Senate President Steve Sweeney and worked in the administrations of three New Jersey governors. Served as the communications director for New Jersey United For Marriage, a grassroots campaign to bring marriage equality to New Jersey and is the former Chair of Garden State Equality's Action Fund Executive Committee. Donnelly is also a celebrated author.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#81 Jeanne Marie Ryan

Keyport Library Director and top library and literacy advocate in New Jersey, Ryan is currently working on getting a bill introduced for federal library construction money. She also advocates for early childhood literacy, through programs like 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. Beyond that, she promotes libraries whenever and wherever possible and manages the NJ Libraries Build Communities FB page.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#82 Kevin P. McCann

Chair of the Cumberland County Democratic Committee, McCann provided critical party leadership as Zack Mullock won the county, 56-43%, over incumbent U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew. McCann also picked up wins in countywide contests.

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#83 Joe DeMarco

Vice Chair, Somerset Democratic Committee. X's and O's on-the-ground expert this year in critical territory for Rebecca Bennett, winner of New Jersey's marquee congressional contest. DeMarco has deep campaign and elections roots, with key wins racked not only in Somerset but Hudson.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#84 Elnardo Webster

Attorney and critical longtime ally of U.S. Senator Cory Booker. Part of the operation that Booker will have in place as he runs for President in 2028.

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#85 Adam Steinberger

Partner at Avoq. Longtime veteran got his start during the Governor Codey days and served in the Corzine Administration. Worked on several major campaigns in New Jersey since 2006 including as a consultant to Steve Fulop's 2013 campaign for Jersey City Mayor and Bonnie Watson Coleman's 2014 Congressional Primary Campaign Manager. His work at Avoq includes high profile companies and organizations including Williams, American Water, the National Education Association and various labor and energy issue campaigns.

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#86 George Helmy

Chief External Affairs and Policy Officer, RWJ. Former chief of staff to Governor Phil Murphy. Former state director for U.S. Senator Cory Booker. Master of policy.

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#87 AJ Sabath

Founder and CEO, Advocacy & Management Group (AMG). Former New Jersey Labor Commissioner and chief-of-state to the late Governor Richard J. Codey, Sabath leads the ranks of pro-labor lobbyists in the State of New Jersey. At present, he occupies a critical forward position on behalf of Building Trades in the ongoing debate about data centers, among many other labor-related issues.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#88 Matt Smith

The Director of NJ Food and Water Watch, Smith has emerged as one of the state's leading environmental advocates. Especially forceful in his support for the Polluters Pay to Make NJ More Affordable Act, which almost made it to the finish line in the last budget session.

HPAE

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CONGRATULATIONS

to all the honorees of the 2026 InsiderNJ Power List



HPAE is the largest union of registered nurses and healthcare 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.

Learn more at HPAE.org

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#89 Rudy Garcia

Under Garcia's leadership, public affairs firm MBI represented the wine and spirits industry when former Governor Murphy tried to reduce the price of liquor licenses and helped the FMBA negotiate the pension process. Expertise includes a lot of healthcare and qualified health center work.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.





#90 Bill Maer and Roger Bodman

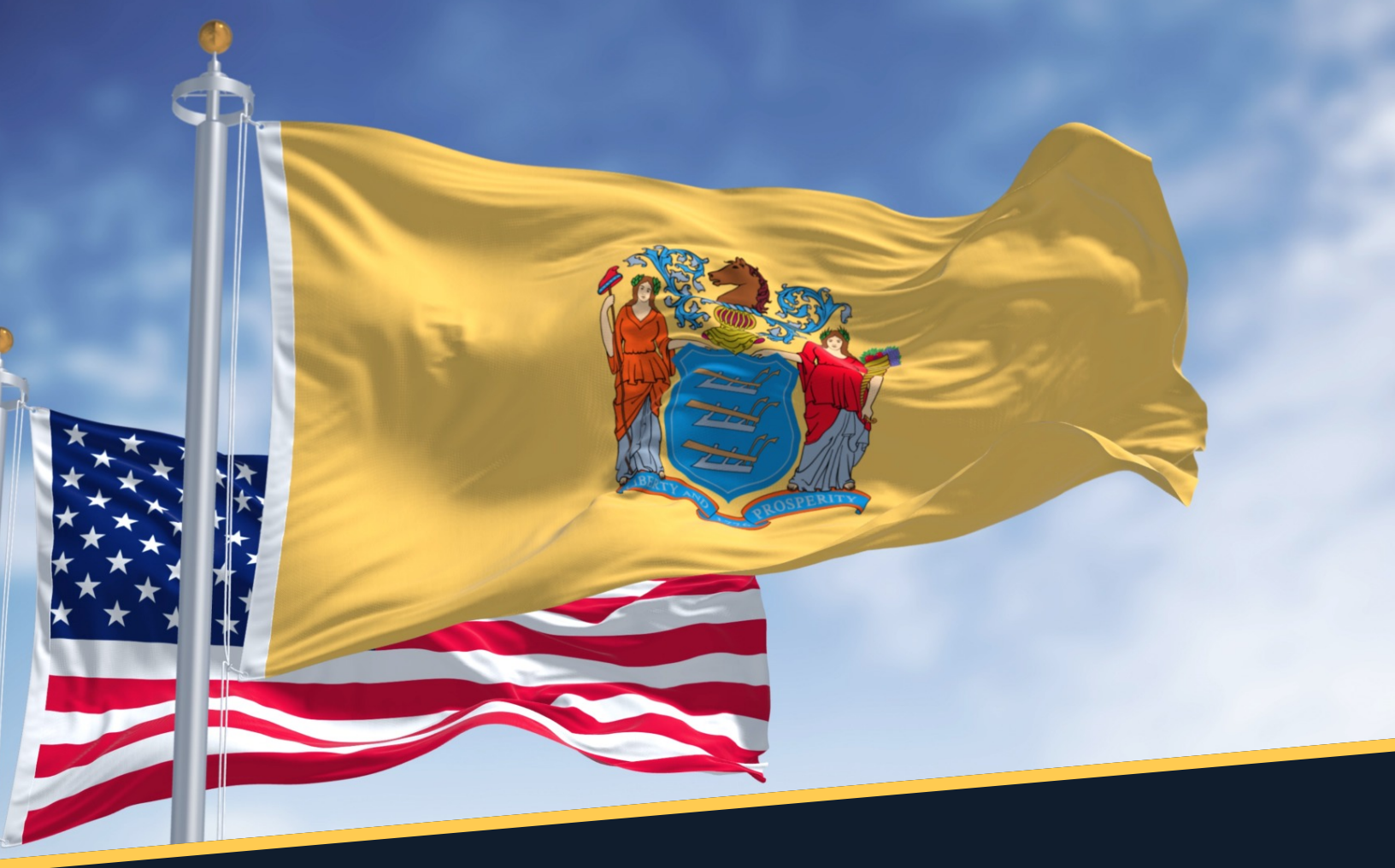
Public Strategies Impact's muscular engine room helmed by these two veterans handles big company concerns, among them Netflix. One hundred and fifty clients.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#91 Guy Citron

Ubiquitous Central Jersey grassroots activist. A strong voice on environmental issues (data centers), First Amendment rights, and social justice (a regular protest presence at Delaney Hall in Newark).



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InsiderNJ's 2026 POWER 100 LIST

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#92 Sean Darcy and Laura Matos

Power couple. Respectively top political operative and communications specialist and lobbying professional at Mad Global Strategy with a deep reservoir of contacts. Matos erved in the administrations of three governors. Member of the Democratic National Committee. Chair of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission. Former legislative redistricting member.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.





#93 Al Komjathy and Eileen Kean

The expert and experienced duo at Komjathy and Kean focus on government and regulatory affairs, association and crisis management. Komjathy began his career as Legislative Assistant to State Senator Francis J. McManimon. He later served as Special Assistant to New Jersey's Commissioner of Corrections. Attorney and former teacher, Kean is a powerful lobbyist who has a diverse resume with state & county offices and 16 years at the firm.

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#94 Samantha DeAlmeida

Serving as the President of the Associated Builders and Contractors of New Jersey, the youngest ever in the role, DeAlmeida has a strong background in government affairs, and is one of the state's leading voices in the construction industry.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#95 Darcy Draeger

The Morris County Democratic Chair expertly navigated the terrain between CD-11 and CD-7 this year, ultimately celebrating the victories of Analilia Mejia (11) and Rebecca Bennett (7). Draeger also notched a stunning countywide win with Chris Russo's dethroning of Commissioner Tayfun Selen.

LiUNA!

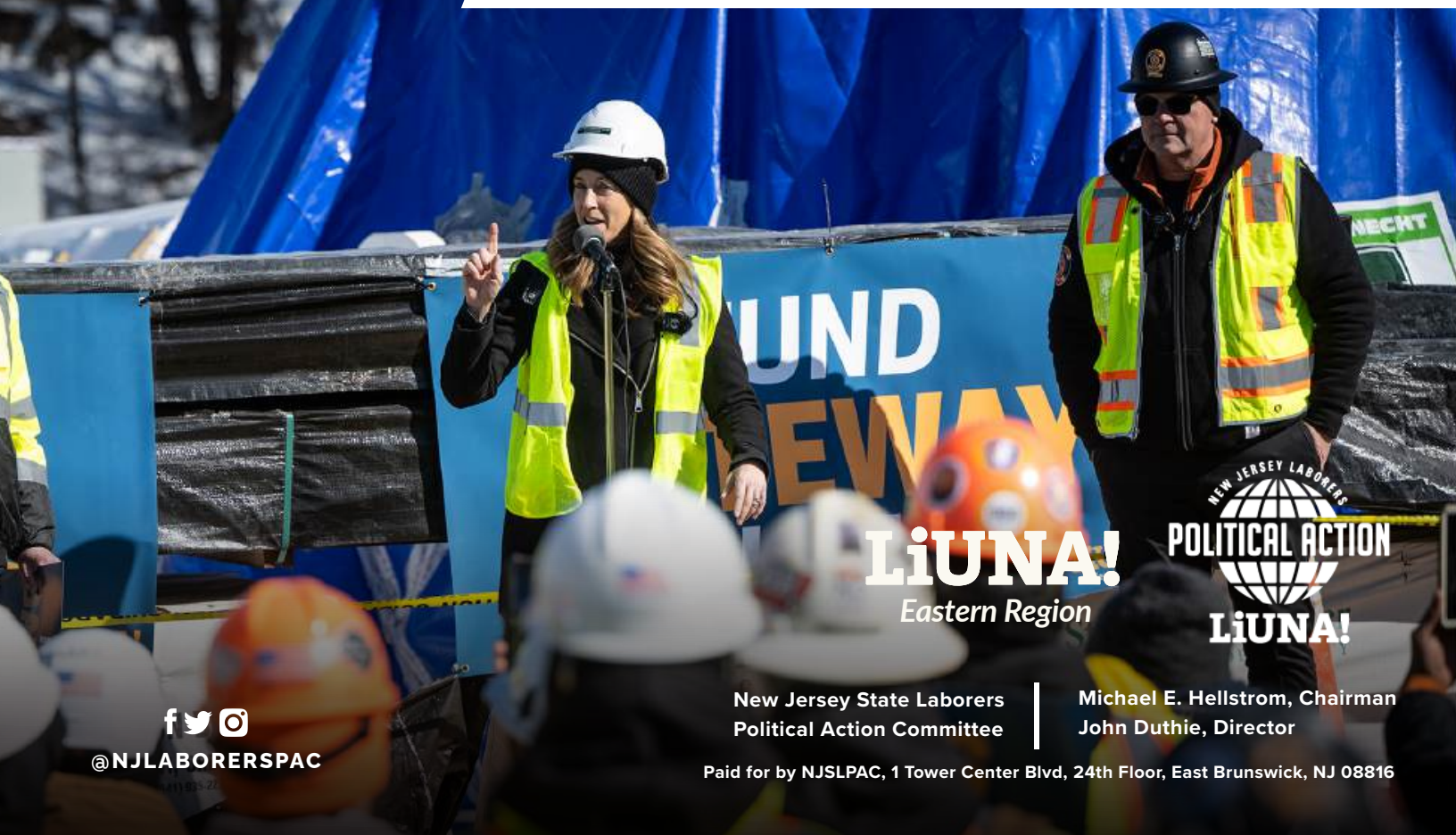
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#96 Joe Hayden

PC Top notch defense lawyer at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, Hayden once stood in Bill Musto's courtroom corner and cross-examined Bob Menendez. A veteran of the Civil Rights movement, he drove as a young man from Newark to Selma, Alabama, to offer his support to embattled civil rights workers. And you won't find a more active and agile legal political mind in the state.

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#97 Bill Bowman

Publisher and editor of the Franklin Reporter and Advocate, Bowman – a former investigative star with Gannett New Jersey – helms one of the last outstanding professionally-run local news operations in the state of New Jersey.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#98 Bernard Kenny

The former Senate Majority Leader from Hoboken, a Navy veteran and leading Hudson County attorney serves as the soulful conscience of the State of New Jersey.

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Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#99 Marie Blistan

Chair of the Cape May Democratic Committee, Blistan - former president of the New Jersey Education Association – provided critical organizations and operations support to Mullock in his successful blue wave bid for Congress in CD-2. Worked closely with State Senator Jim Beach (D-6) and other key South Jersey allies.

Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#100 Kevin Ortega-Rojas

Covering the Delaney Hall story in Newark this year, the independent journalist contributed excellent advocacy work and won the recognition of Make the Road New Jersey.

do social justice.



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Highlighting the leaders shaping New Jersey.



#101 Chris Carroll

Zack Mullock's campaign manager emerged as the operative star of the cycle, as he successfully took on the GOP establishment alongside the Cape May Mayor – and won.