



ALLIANCE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE NJ GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: Phil Murphy

1. Currently NJ unemployment rates are approximately 53% among people with disabilities. If elected, what efforts would your administration undergo to hire qualified individuals with disabilities as well as encourage the private sector?

As governor, I will be determined to make New Jersey the most inclusive and most accessible place to live, work, and raise a family for people with disabilities. That goal begins with our state government. My administration will be committed to creating a work environment that values diversity and inclusion. I will ensure that all state departments and agencies actively seek to hire differently abled employees because of the tremendous value they bring to the workplace. In an effort to attract and retain employees with disabilities, we will work to provide accommodation tools and increase accessibility to our buildings and offices. We will actively work with all levels of government and the private sector to dispel myths, remove barriers, and educate and expose employers to the benefits of working with people with disabilities.

2. What steps should the State of New Jersey take to increase access to public transportation currently not served by NJ Transit? (I.e. Sussex County, Somerset County)

While much of the focus with regard to NJ Transit has been on events at New York Penn Station, we cannot ignore the fact that intrastate transportation has suffered enormously during the Christie administration. Much of that is due to the fact that we have failed to make the necessary investments in NJ Transit. Since Gov. Christie took office, operating assistance has been cut by 90 percent, leading to increased fares and decreased quality. I believe that increased investment in NJ Transit will lead to both better quality and the expansion of bus services within the state, including to areas not previously served.

3. Even though the Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990, people with disabilities still face accessibility barriers. For example, inaccessible stores, elevators broken at train stations and snow removal laws not being upheld. What will your administration do to fight discrimination and enforce the ADA?

The ADA bolstered the rights of people with disabilities to access goods and services on an equal basis with those without disabilities. I will work to ensure that businesses and government offices are aware of the comprehensive nature of the statute. It must be a priority to enforce the provisions of the ADA law in the state of New Jersey so that all government offices and businesses are accessible to all individuals.

4. Do you support or oppose proposals to block grant or per capital cap Medicaid spending in NJ? What Medicaid services in NJ, if any, would you seek to eliminate under a block grant or per capita spending system?

I strongly oppose any attempts to block grant or institute per capita caps for Medicaid. The per capita caps in Trump's proposed health care plan would devastate New Jersey, and would likely cost the state billions of dollars in federal funding each year. We must also defend the Medicaid expansion, which has provided more than 500,000 New Jerseyans with health insurance for the first time. As Governor, I will pressure members from both parties in our congressional delegation to do the right thing for New Jersey and preserve the Affordable Care Act. If the worst comes to pass and per capita caps are instituted, I will immediately convene a crisis commission, including our Congressional delegation, to examine all options on how to move forward.

5. If elected, what would your administration do to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the planning and implementation of emergency preparedness efforts on the county, state and local levels?

From early on in my campaign, I have made it clear that people with disabilities have a seat at our policy-making table – for all issues, but especially for emergency preparedness. As governor, I will require all local, county and state emergency planning efforts to include the considerations of those with disabilities when identifying needs and evaluating effective emergency management practices. It is critical that we adopt policies to ensure that community evacuation plans enable people with disabilities to safely self-evacuate or to be evacuated by others. Further, I will work to ensure that contracts for emergency services require providers to follow appropriate steps to deliver accessible emergency services.

6. In NJ, there is a shortage of accessible, safe and low-income housing for people with disabilities. How would you propose to increase the inventory of housing throughout the state?

I have made clear that I will fight for New Jersey's fair share of Wall Street mortgage settlement funds and use them to increase the supply of affordable housing. That must include affordable housing for people with disabilities. Some Wall Street banks have already partnered with non-profits like New Jersey Community Capital to construct such housing, which is a positive step and something I would seek to expand. I also believe we need to make sure that homestead rebates, many of which go to individuals with disabilities, see their value rise with the cost of living and that they are paid timely. And we need to invest in affordable housing more broadly, including by expanding proven programs such as the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit, for which every public dollar has returned many times that in private dollars.

7. Persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities are victimized by sexual assault crimes at much higher rates than the rest of the population, and they are often targeted specifically because of their disabilities. What steps would your administration take to reduce the risk of crimes committed against people with disabilities? Would you direct your Attorney General's office to work more closely with disability agencies on training and prevention?

The statistics about sexual assault against children and adults with disabilities are shocking and unacceptable. If elected Governor, I would direct the Attorney General's Office Division of Civil Rights to prevent abuse of this targeted population. We would prioritize: (1) training law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure they appropriately respond to accusations, (2) improving background checks for caretakers, and (3) streamlining reporting to Adult Protective Services and law enforcement, and ensuring that people with disabilities can access reporting tools. I would direct the Attorney General's office to work with disability agencies to ensure that law enforcement prevents and responds to abuse as effectively as possible.

8. In the *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999) decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states are required to eliminate unnecessary segregation of persons with disabilities and to ensure that persons with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Do you feel the state is doing what it can do to fully implement this ruling? If not, what measures does NJ need to take?

New Jersey has made significant progress reducing its institutionalized population and providing community housing. This would not have

happened without the actions of dedicated advocates. But the state still can and must do more. We must bring together multiple government departments and increase access to transport, employment, education, emergency preparedness, and support services. If elected Governor, I would develop a new state plan to ensure that the state promotes integration in all walks of life and include people with disabilities in our policy-making decisions.

9. If elected, would you support or oppose legislation prohibiting insurance companies conducting business in New Jersey from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions?

Access to health care is a basic right – one that is under assault by Donald Trump and Republicans in Washington and the special interests that support them. New Jersey is no exception. For too long we have let special interests like for-profit hospitals outweigh the interests of 9 million residents. As governor, I will end that. New Jersey has been a national leader on healthcare in the past and I will make sure we lead once again. This starts with standing up to Donald Trump and the right-wing agenda to repeal the ACA, gut Medicaid and Medicare, and deny coverage to those with pre-existing conditions. I will ensure that insurance companies that conduct business in NJ cannot deny coverage to people with pre-existing conditions.

10. Do you support the proposal by the Coalition of Direct Support Professionals Living Wage, which would increase the salary of support professionals by \$1.25 per hour every year for five years, bringing the starting hourly wage to \$16.75 by the year 2022. This will attract more support professionals to the field and reduce the high turnover rate that is currently 44%.

I have consistently supported raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over a period of time, which would result in a similar pay raise schedule as the referenced proposal. I do believe that wages to Direct Support Professionals need to increase.

11. State and federal law provide that students with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Do you support or oppose increased funding to ensure that New Jersey public schools and teachers have the resources and training necessary to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities?

I believe that our public schools are a critical part of what makes this state great. People move here and businesses invest here because of the world-class public schools in New Jersey. But for too long, we've had leaders

who would rather spend money on tax breaks for large corporations than invest in our children's future.

Governor Christie has underfunded schools by more than \$8 billion and attacked our educators at every step. I will put our educators ahead of the special interests. It is time to treat our teachers with respect and allow them to get back to doing what they do best: educate. This includes ensuring that teachers have the training necessary to meet the diverse needs of students, including those with disabilities.

12. Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization. As a vital resource in the community, would you support additional funding for the 11 CILs in order to meet the increased demand for our services?

I am supportive of Centers for Independent Living because they give individuals with disabilities the autonomy to govern their own lives. I am appalled by the Trump administration's proposed drastic cuts to funding for independent living centers, and will pressure our congressional delegation to push back against his budget. If funding is cut at the federal level, I will seek to mitigate the effects by fighting for increased state funding.

13. In April 2012, Governor Chris Christie made New Jersey an 'Employment First' state. It means that competitive employment is the first and preferred post-education activity for everyone, including people with disabilities. However, there are still approximately only 47% of the population of people with disabilities in NJ, ages 18 to 64, employed (compared to 79.5% of same age group in the general population). How do you propose to increase employment among New Jerseyans with disabilities?

As I stated above as governor, I will be determined to make New Jersey the most inclusive and most accessible place to live, work, and raise a family for people with disabilities.

Making New Jersey an Employment First state was a good first step, but we need to ensure that our state policies promote and enhance the Employment First goal. I will work to better coordinate state services for people with disabilities. Currently, Trenton provides an array of disability-related programs, services, and supports. Many are good. Most, however, are unknown or seemingly beyond the reach of those who need them most. I believe we need to do better.

As Governor, I will make sure that people with disabilities have a seat at our policy-making table. That will be true for the full range of issues, from housing and transportation to employment and education to emergency preparedness and response. And that will be true for children, adults, seniors, and veterans. Improving the lives of people with disabilities is a top priority for me.

14. If nominated by your party for the general election, would you commit to addressing the crowd at the NJ Disability Pride Parade & Celebration on Saturday, October 7th in Trenton?

If I am fortunate enough to be the Democratic nominee, I would be honored to address the crowd at the NJ Disability Pride Parade & Celebration, and will do everything I can to be there.