



NJBA
New Jersey Business
& Industry Association

**TYING IT
ALL TOGETHER:**
Summaries, Thought Leader
Ideas & Key Takeaways from
NJBIA's 2020 Public Policy Forum

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A Note from the President

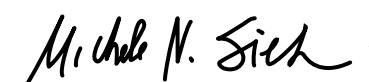
Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in NJBIA's event summary for the 2020 Public Policy Forum: "Bringing Business Back in Trying and Taxing Times," presented in partnership with Amazon. As the nation's largest statewide employer association, NJBIA prides itself on being a key driver of public policy in the Garden State. Accordingly, we annually welcome leaders from government, industry, and academia to discuss key issues facing the state and actionable solutions for policymakers.

Our businesses remain at limited capacity during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, putting the livelihoods of business owners and individual employees at stake. Our esteemed panelists discuss what the state can do in the face of COVID-19 and in other key areas for business including capital, healthcare, infrastructure, innovation, politics, and workforce development.

We hope these panels can be a resource to business owners, policymakers, and individuals looking to understand the issues facing New Jersey and the policies needed to restore its economy. NJBIA's Government Affairs team will continue to advocate for policies that will help our businesses reopen and strengthen our economy for the future.

Sincerely,



President & CEO, NJBIA

*Disclaimer: NJBIA's Public Policy Forum was recorded on and before Dec.1, 2020. Some content that while true back on Dec.1 may no longer reflect today's reality. Despite this, NJBIA believes the thought leader ideas and key takeaways from each panel continue to be relevant for current and future policy discussions.





Gov. Phil Murphy

Video



Murphy Exhibits Optimism
on State's Fiscal Outlook at
NJBIA's Public Policy Forum

Remarks from Governor Murphy

Summary

DURING HIS REMARKS, Gov. Murphy discussed the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of a quick economic recovery. He touted the state's efforts to mitigate the economic downturn through direct financial assistance for small businesses with an emphasis on women and minority owned establishments, the Career Impact Bond Fund, and the revised state budget. Noting the powerful impacts of good corporate citizenship in New Jersey, Gov. Murphy touted the CEO Council's commitment to hire or train over 30,000 New Jersey residents and spend \$250 million on local purchasing.

Looking forward, the governor focused on the potential for a strong economic recovery. He discussed the promise of a new tax incentive program (which is now law), ongoing infrastructure investments, and New Jersey's key assets: an ideal location, a No. 1 ranked K-12 public education system, quality higher education institutions, and the state's highly educated, highly skilled workforce.

Fireside Chat 1

**Jonathan Holloway**

President of Rutgers,
The State University of
New Jersey

**Charlene Brown**

President AT&T
-New Jersey

Summary

JONATHAN HOLLOWAY DISCUSSED his brief time so far as President of Rutgers University and fielded questions from Charlene Brown, President of AT&T New Jersey, on the university's handling of the pandemic and where he hopes to see the university grow. Holloway offered three overarching goals: the pursuit of academic excellence, simplifying the structure of the university, and creating a beloved community where all members are valued for their contributions.

While the pandemic has been tough financially for Rutgers, Holloway touted its key success in developing a COVID-19 test and implementing virtual learning for its massive student body.

Holloway highlighted the key role Rutgers plays, and must continue to play, in fostering economic mobility and growth whether that is for its students, local communities, or the state. Key ways to do that, Holloway said, include facilitating research collaboration among universities, using the university's buying power to support local businesses where possible, providing students with necessary financial and mental health resources, ensuring students get work experience, and helping create viable upskilling and reskilling opportunities for the state's workforce.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- Facilitate collaboration between universities in New Jersey, especially where it makes logistical and financial sense to do so.
- Ensure that students are getting work experience, such as through internships, so that they understand what being in the workforce requires.
- Repurpose the online learning services that universities have successfully rolled out to serve NJ's business and workforce needs.
- Foster collaboration and communication channels between academia, industry, and government.

Video

A Fireside Chat with Rutgers
President Jonathan Holloway and
AT&T NJ President Charlene Brown

Fireside Chat 2

**Madeline Bell**

Chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and President & CEO of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

**Ralph Izzo**

Chairman, President & CEO, PSEG

Video

A Fireside Chat with
Madeline Bell and Ralph Izzo

Summary

AT A TIME when economic and public health realities are more intertwined than ever, Madeline Bell offered insights as a key decision-maker in both spheres. While the Federal Reserve has been able to support the economy by lowering interest rates, expanding lending to diverse types of organizations, and targeting specific sectors, the economy is far from healthy. In New Jersey, where regional economies can be drastically different, Bell noted areas that are dependent on leisure and hospitality have suffered disproportionately. Bell stated that additional economic stimulus is imperative.

Speaking from the perspective of her other role as CEO of Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP), Bell discussed the public health conditions and struggles of the health services industry. Bell also noted the financial strain felt by hospitals, which have not recovered financially after elective surgeries were suspended and travel restrictions imposed. Although a great deal has been learned about COVID-19, Bell acknowledged that cases are multiplying even faster than they did in the spring, creating substantial uncertainty. While she said she expects COVID-19 vaccines to be extremely helpful, she noted there are logistical challenges, such as safely storing the vaccine and effectively educating the public on the importance of getting vaccinated.

Bell highlighted the cooperation among industry leaders as a positive aspect during these challenging times, stating that continuing communication could help struggling businesses through this prolonged downturn.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- › Federal stimulus is needed across the country and across a variety of industries.
- › Policymakers need to pay attention to the different regional business realities across New Jersey.
- › Industry leaders need to continue to come together to communicate and coordinate.



Julie Roginsky
Democratic Party
strategist and
media contributor



Patrick Murray
Director of Monmouth
University Polling Institute
and media contributor



Michael DuHaime
Republican Party
strategist and
media contributor



Moderator
Dr. Benjamin Dworkin
Director of Rowan
Institute for Public Policy
& Citizenship

Video



Pollsters and Pundits Predict
What Trump Loss Means for
NJ Races in 2021

Political Roundup

Summary

THE PANELISTS DISCUSSED the results of the 2020 election: a rebuke of President Trump, but not the Republican Party, with Democrats potentially not flipping the Senate, and Republicans gaining House seats, three state legislative bodies, and a governorship. Although President Trump will be on his way out of the White House, the panelists expect him to stay relevant for both parties: exerting influence over the Republican party and helping Democrats continue to turn out voters.

Moving forward, New Jerseyans will soon be shifting their sights toward the 2021 gubernatorial election. Panelists expect COVID-19 and local economic conditions to play important roles in the election, with Gov. Murphy attempting to defend his record in a state that will potentially still be grappling with the pandemic in some form. In terms of Republican challengers, Jack Ciattarelli and Doug Steinhardt (since withdrawn from the race) were thought to be the two frontrunners for the GOP nomination, the former having run before and the latter being the state Republican Party chairperson.

Panelists also discussed the delay of the redistricting process and the positive results of early voting, which they expect will play a role in future elections.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- Create a standardized process for early and vote-by-mail voting.
- Facilitate and encourage high voter turnout as was seen in 2020, as well in 2008.
- Educate the public on polling so they better understand margins of error and uncertainty in polling results.

*Note: Redistricting is supposed to take place every 10 years however, this year the Legislature passed a law that delays the redistricting process in the event census data is not received by February 15.



Senate President
Stephen M. Sweeney



Assembly Speaker
Craig J. Coughlin



Republican Senate Leader
Thomas H. Kean Jr.



Republican Assembly
Leader Jon M. Bramnick



Moderator
Rhonda Schaffler
NJ Spotlight News
Business Reporter

Video



Tax Incentives, Infrastructure
Investment, and Federal Money
Needed, Legislative Leaders Say

New Jersey's Legislative Leaders

Summary

THE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS discussed the success they have had in reaching across the aisle and passing relief legislation for New Jerseyans when they needed it most, while acknowledging the importance for the Legislature to address long-standing issues before the end of the year and in 2021.

Priorities include a new tax incentive program to improve the state's poor business climate and directly assisting ailing businesses. The panelists noted the importance of federal funding, but also said the state Legislature could assist businesses. On the key topic of COVID-19 business liability protections, Kean and Bramnick were more receptive, while Speaker Coughlin stated that he did not believe they were necessary.

In 2021, the leaders aim to provide real, tangible relief to businesses and families in New Jersey. Using the lessons they learned through 2020, they said they are hopeful they can legislate accordingly to bring about a robust economic recovery.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- Tax waivers for businesses that were negatively affected by the pandemic.
- Enact legislation to spread out Unemployment Insurance tax increases over three years. (NOW LAW)
- Pass COVID-19 liability protections for businesses who follow applicable health standards.
- Pass a tax incentive program to attract and retain businesses in New Jersey. (NOW LAW)



R. David Rousseau
Former State Treasurer
under Governor Corzine



Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff
Former State Treasurer
under Governor Christie



Ford Scudder
Former State Treasurer
under Governor Christie



Moderator
Lori Roth
Co-managing Partner
at Prager Metis

Video

Experts Discuss New Jersey's
\$4B in Borrowing and
More in Budget Panel

State Budget Experts Weigh in on New Jersey's Economic Future

Summary

THE FORMER STATE treasurers began the panel by discussing the economic downturn caused by the public health crisis and the pre-pandemic societal shifts that were beginning to take hold, including how and where people work.

Numerous opportunities for reforms were identified, including a shift in income tax collection for former interstate commuters and telecommuters, the attraction of New York City corporations and businesses to a New Jersey location, health benefits and pension reform for public workers, the requirement of all school districts in the state to offer K-12 education, and the regionalization of police forces. Although the former treasurers admitted the politics surrounding these opportunities may prove too much to overcome, the question was posed: "If not now, then when?"

The group also discussed the state's high level of debt, including the recent state Supreme Court decision allowing the state to borrow billions of dollars to offset state revenue losses caused by the pandemic. The conversation concluded with discussion about the incoming Biden-Harris administration and the opportunities that might result such as: investment in infrastructure (including mass transit and the Gateway tunnel) and urban areas. However, the group noted that divided politics will pose a threat to the administration's productivity and investment.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- › Attract New York City corporations to locations in New Jersey.
- › Identify pre-pandemic New Jersey interstate commuters who are now working primarily from the Garden State, instead of New York City offices, and shift their state income tax contributions to the Garden State, as opposed to New York.
- › Implement cost-cutting structural reforms related to public employee health and pension benefits and regionalized police forces.



Deborah Bierbaum
AT&T Assistant VP for
External Tax Policy



Senator Steven V. Oroho
Senate Republican
Budget Officer



Marc Pfeiffer
Assistant Director
of Bloustein Local
Government
Research Center



Alan D. Sobel
Managing Member
of SobelCo



Moderator
Christopher Emigholz
NJBIA VP of
Government Affairs

 Video

Embracing an Affordability
Agenda to Attract Business

Chasing Capital

New Jersey Needs to Embrace an Affordability Agenda to Attract Business

Summary

THE PANELISTS FOCUSED on New Jersey's tax situation, competitiveness, and affordability. While these are challenges that could be chasing away potential capital investments, the group agreed another big issue for New Jersey is its image and value proposition. Being a state where it is expensive to live and do business is OK if there is a high return on investment. While panelists argued that the value proposition is strong in New Jersey – an ideal location, No. 1 ranked K-12 public education system and a highly educated and highly skilled workforce – the group agreed the Garden State needs to do a better job of promoting itself, they said.

The “Path to Progress” report and ideas to make New Jersey more competitive were discussed extensively by the panelists. Property taxes, the Corporation Business Tax (CBT), regulatory burdens, tax incentives, and the overall cost of doing business in New Jersey (including labor and healthcare costs) were all discussed as factors that deter business from coming to New Jersey. Senator Oroho discussed New Jersey’s historic trends of wealth creation and wealth outmigration. Yet as Marc Pfeiffer noted, data and polls point to New Jersey remaining the most densely populated state in the nation as a major reason for these high costs. Pfeiffer also noted that while people complain about their taxes, polls show they are happy to live in New Jersey.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- Create and promote a brand in New Jersey.
- Better articulate what New Jersey taxpayers are receiving for their money.
- Create a study commission to analyze New Jersey’s tax structure and policies to identify uncompetitive outliers.
- Simplify New Jersey’s regulatory structure to make doing business in the state simpler.
- Identify pre-pandemic interstate commuters who are now working primarily from New Jersey and shift their income tax contributions to the Garden State as opposed to out-of-state.



Allen J. Karp
EVP of Healthcare
Management and
Transformation at
Horizon BCBSNJ



John Hoffman
ViP of Health Policy &
Advocacy for Johnson
& Johnson



Cathleen D. Bennett
President & CEO,
New Jersey
Hospital Association



Moderator
Chrissy Buteas
NJBIA Chief Government
Affairs Officer

Video



The Changing Dynamics
in Healthcare

The Future of Health Coverage in New Jersey

Changing Dynamics in Healthcare Delivery and Insurance Coverage

Summary

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC was discussed at length by the panel of healthcare experts from various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, health insurance, and hospitals.

Healthcare worker burnout, behavioral health, changing workforce dynamics, and telehealth/telemedicine were among some of the topics discussed. The experts also talked about the coronavirus vaccine, calling the speed and efficiency in which it was developed both a blessing and a curse. A lack of public trust in vaccine development has raised challenges in attracting people to participate in trials and it is anticipated that there will be difficulty getting people to take the vaccine as well. Vaccine cost, distribution and prioritization were also discussed by the panel.

The panel concluded by discussing the importance of collaboration among healthcare stakeholders and the need for a strong focus on community health. Food and housing insecurities, a lack of transportation, and availability of quality, affordable healthcare are all major factors in community health and often cause health disparities amongst groups.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- Educate the public on the safety, effectiveness, and differences of the coronavirus vaccines.
- Encourage employers to become aware of employees' "whole" health, including physical, mental, and environmental health.
- Consider future health and economic emergencies in businesses strategic plans to ensure small- and medium-sized companies are financially prepared to support employee retention and health coverage in an emergency, such as COVID-19.
- Prioritize community health to reduce health disparities in the Garden State.



Dr. Rodney D. Priestley
Vice Dean for Innovation
at Princeton University



Dr. Joel S. Bloom
President, NJ Institute of
Technology (NJIT)



Judith Sheft
Executive Director at the
New Jersey Commission
for Science, Innovation &
Technology (CSIT)



Assembly Majority Leader
Louis D. Greenwald



Moderator
Chrissy Buteas
NJBIA Chief Government
Affairs Officer

Video



Experts Outline Vision
for Boosting New Jersey's
Innovation Economy

The Modern Innovation State

Challenges & Solutions for Driving Innovation in the Garden State

Summary

NEW JERSEY HAS tremendous assets (or “bones” as Assembly Majority Leader Greenwald put it) that should serve as tools to help New Jersey reinvent its innovation ecosystem including: the No. 1 ranked K-12 public education system in the United States, an ideal location, top-tier higher education institutions, and a highly educated workforce. However, the expert panelists agreed that while New Jersey is moving in the right direction, it will be difficult to achieve the goal of recreating an innovation ecosystem if the state is not “intentional” with its decision-making.

Funding pathways to employment in innovative industries, funding higher education institutions and increasing collaboration among New Jersey’s postsecondary institutions were some of the key highlights discussed during the innovation panel. Enhanced partnerships with the private sector were also a major priority for all panelists.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- › Increase funding for higher education institutions.
- › Educate individuals on employment pathways for innovative industries.
- › Increase collaboration among the state’s higher education institutions.



Aaron R. Fichtner, Ph.D.
President of NJ Council
of County Colleges



Lesley Hirsch
NJDOLWD's Assistant
Commissioner of
Research and Information



**Assemblywoman
Mila M. Jasey**
Chairwoman of
Assembly Higher
Education Committee



Ardine Williams
Amazon's VP of Workforce
Development at HQ2



**Moderator
Chris Emigholz**
NJBIA VP of
Government Affairs

Video

Workforce Development is
a Key Component to a
Stronger & Fairer Economy

Workforce Development is a Key Component to a Stronger & Fairer Economy

Summary

THE PANELISTS PROVIDED important examples of how their respective entities address workforce development in New Jersey. The panel discussed Amazon's credential and skill-building programs, the Pathway and Skills Collaborative that seeks to provide important skills and identify pathways into key industries, the Department of Labor's Data for the American Dream project which will create a Credential Engine that will help individuals find the highest quality career training programs, and the appetite in the state Legislature to make something happen for New Jersey residents.

The panel also noted the hard impacts of the pandemic on New Jersey's workforce. Significantly, the summer's exciting economic recovery numbers have long since simmered into an incremental recovery. Still, panelists noted the pandemic forced many to rethink workforce development and there is already broad consensus about what is important: helping individuals get the skills needed for in-demand jobs, providing robust pathways for underserved communities, and ensuring employees have opportunities for growth. The challenge now will be implementing these programs and driving New Jersey residents, whether they are high schoolers or mid-career professionals, toward these pathways as new opportunities and trends drive what will be in demand in the post-pandemic world.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- › Advertise pathways and opportunities other than the traditional trajectory of high school to four-year university.
- › Business community needs to identify key skill sets, consolidating in-demand skills across industries so that higher education institutions can provide in-demand training.
- › Strengthen connections between K-12, community colleges, two- and four-year universities, and industry so that students have a stronger idea of existing careers, necessary and in-demand skills, and where they can develop those skills.



Sam Donelson
VP & NJ Chief
Development Officer
at AECOM



George Kimmerle
Founder & President at
Kimmerle Group



Peter Simon
Chief of Staff at the Port
Authority of New York
and New Jersey



Richard T. Thigpen
Senior VP of Corporate
Citizenship at PSEG



Moderator
Ray Cantor
NJBIA VP of
Government Affairs

Video



Infrastructure for a
21st Century Economy

Infrastructure for a 21st Century Economy

Summary

WHETHER IT IS our ports, airports, railways, or state-spanning highways, our transportation infrastructure facilitates a myriad of commercial activities. It also enables individuals throughout the region to efficiently get where they need to go whether for work or play. Energy, of course, makes all this possible. The panelists highlighted affordability and climate change as key themes for energy: New Jerseyans need an affordable and efficient balance as the state reduces fossil fuel reliance.

The panel also discussed the importance of making infrastructure investments that stimulate private investment, reflect the needs of residents or customers, and drive economic activity.

The panelists noted the ways infrastructure development will be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the amount of federal assistance that is – allocated. Simon noted that additional federal stimulus is imperative for continuing important infrastructure projects, generating commercial activity, and creating thousands of jobs in the region.

Thought Leader Ideas & Key Takeaways

- › Find a new funding mechanism for Transportation Trust Fund.
- › Enable nuclear energy infrastructure to grow.
- › Utilize existing infrastructure programs such as P3 and design-build.



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www.njbia.org/PPF2020Report

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