

GET OUT THE VOTE 2017

A VOTING AND ELECTION GUIDE FOR NEW JERSEY CITIZENS WITH
INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES



GET OUT THE VOTE 2017

New Jersey residents will make some very important decisions at the polls this year. The State will elect a new governor – for the first time in eight years - and 120 members to the State’s Legislature. Of those 120 members, 40 will be Senators and 80 will be Assemblymen and Assemblywomen. In the next four years, the Governor and the Legislature will vote and take action on a number of bills and regulations that will greatly impact your life. That is why it’s critical to understand the voting process and learn more about the candidates before you head to the polls on Election Day. The representatives you send to Trenton will decide on budgets and laws that will likely impact services and supports for people with I/DD. They will make choices on special education, health care, employment, transportation, and other services you and your loved ones rely on in the community.

Voting is a big responsibility. We hope this **2017 Get Out the Vote Guide** helps you as you make your way to the polls. It includes key dates, instructions on registering to vote and information on where and how you can cast a ballot. In addition, check out our web site, www.gotvnj.org, for additional information and content.

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017 is Election Day. Use this publication as your guide, but don’t stop there. Research your candidates on the Internet. Attend a town hall or debate. Stay informed and then cast your vote and make your voice heard!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Who are the candidates?

Voters in November will elect the State’s next Governor and Lieutenant Governor as well as all 120 members of New Jersey’s State Legislature. This include 40 Senators and 80 Assembly members. The list of candidates for Senate can be found here: <http://bit.ly/Candidate-ForSenate> and the list of candidates for Assembly can be found here: <http://bit.ly/Candidate-ForAssembly>.

*Incumbents are noted with an asterisk.

Why should you vote?

Voting allows you to elect people that will represent you and fight for the issues you believe in.

What is voting?

Voting is your right. Voting is your choice. Voting is your voice.



When is voting?

Voting takes place on Tuesday, November 7, 2017.

What time is voting?

Voting starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 8 p.m.

Who can vote?

To vote you must be a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years old and registered to vote. You cannot vote if you are in jail, on parole or on probation. You must also be able to understand what it means to vote. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has an intellectual or other disability. Only a judge can declare that an individual lacks capacity to vote. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she has a legal guardian. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she lives in an institution, developmental center or group home. It is **not** legal to deny someone the right to vote based on the fact that he or she receives services or supports related to a disability.

How can I register to vote?

You can register to vote by mailing in the Voter Registration Application to your county clerk. You can also register to vote in person at the Office of the County Commissioner of Registration. The application can be printed from the New Jersey Division of Elections web site: Elections.NJ.gov. You must register to vote by **October 17, 2017** to participate in the November Election. To find your county clerk, visit <http://bit.ly/CountyClerks>.

How can I vote by mail instead of in person?

If you want to vote by mail, you must first be a registered voter. Download a Vote By Mail Application online at: <http://bit.ly/Vote-ByMail>. A voter may also apply for a Vote By Mail Application in person at the Clerk's office in your county. Keep in mind, the County Clerk cannot accept faxed or emailed copies of an Application for a Vote by Mail Ballot, unless you are a military or overseas voter, since an original signature is required. When your Vote By Mail Ballot arrives, it will include instructions. Your Mail-In Ballot must be received by the County Board of Election before close of polls on Election Day. Also, if you have already asked for a Vote by Mail Ballot, you may NOT vote in person during that election.



What do I need to vote in person?

You must bring proof that you live in your county before you can register to vote and cast your vote on Election Day. Proof can include a driver's license, a student ID, a government issued ID or a document with your name and address on it such as a bank statement or government issued check like a Social Security check. If you did not provide identification to the county commissioner of registration, or if the identification information could not be verified (i.e., your driver's license number or the last four digits of your social security number), you may be asked to show identification at the polling place when you go to vote.

Where do I vote?

Polling places are typically set up at schools, libraries or firehouses in your town. Registered voters are assigned a specific location to vote. To find your polling place, and to check if you are registered, visit the NJ Division of Elections web site at Elections.NJ.gov. The web site will also let you know if your polling place is ADA compliant or accessible.

Are polling places accessible for people with disabilities?

One accessible polling machine adapted for audio must be available at every polling place to allow voters with a visual impairment to verify and cast their votes in private and without assistance. Polling places should be integrated settings, meaning that all people (with and without disabilities) should vote together in the same space. People with disabilities have the right (1) to reasonable accommodations that make it possible for them to vote, and (2) to use auxiliary aids (such as Assisted Listening equipment, registration forms in Braille and large print, ramps to access the polling area) to ensure that communication is effective. You can also either (a) ask a friend, family member or staff member to enter the booth with you, or (b) ask for help from poll workers at your polling place on Election Day.

What should I do if I go to vote and am told I can't vote because I have a disability?

If you have a problem on Election Day with being allowed to vote or getting assistance with voting, call Disability Rights NJ at **1-800-922-7233**.

BALLOT QUESTIONS:

This year's ballot asks voters to decide on both a Constitutional Amendment and a Public Question.

QUESTION #1

The first question which would amend the State's Constitution, would dedicate money collected by the State relating to natural resource damages through settlements or awards for legal claims based on environmental contamination. The funds would be used to repair, replace or restore damaged natural resources, or to preserve the State's natural resources. Currently these collected funds may be used for any purpose.

To read question #1 ahead of time, click here: <http://bit.ly/Ballot-NaturalResources>.

QUESTION #2

The second ballot question asks voters to approve or deny a change to the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act. If approved, the State would then be able to sell \$125 million in State bonds. Proceeds from the bonds would be used for constructing, expanding and equipping public libraries.

To read question #2 ahead of time, click here <http://bit.ly/Ballot-LibraryConstruction>.

QUICK RESOURCES

- ➔ Visit www.GOTVNJ.org for more information and resources!
- ➔ Voting takes place on Tuesday, **November 7, 2017**.
- ➔ Voting time begins at **6 AM** and ends at **8 PM**.
- ➔ Visit www.Elections.NJ.gov to find your assigned location for voting.
- ➔ Call **1-800-922-7233** if you have any issues with getting assistance with voting.

2017 ELECTION FOR THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY



Republican Kim Guadagno



Democrat Phil Murphy

Candidates for Governor this year include Republican Kim Guadagno and Democrat Phil Murphy. Guadagno currently serves as the State's Lieutenant Governor while Murphy served as the US Ambassador to Germany. Each candidate also has a running mate that makes up the other half of the ticket. This person will be the State's Lieutenant Governor and will serve in place of the Governor in case of a vacancy. Kim Guadagno's running mate is Carlos Rendo, the Mayor of Woodcliff Lake. Phil Murphy's running mate is Sheila Oliver, the former Assembly Speaker and current Assemblywoman representing the state's 34th legislative district.

Each candidate has a platform, otherwise known as a set of principal goals which outline where they stand on a given issue. It's important for you to learn more about the candidates' platforms before heading to the polls. A great way to find out additional information is to visit the candidates' web sites. They are www.kimfornj.com and www.murphy4nj.com.

Both gubernatorial candidates, **Republican Kim Guadagno** and **Democrat Phil Murphy**, were invited to answer questions of importance to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Responses are printed here in their entirety, and unedited.

2017 ELECTION FOR THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

Q: The Arc of New Jersey is a strong proponent of integrated living and full inclusion for people with I/DD. As Governor, what would you do ensure supports and services are maintained and enhanced so that people with I/DD can live integrated lives in the community throughout the State?

Republican Kim Guadagno's answer:

"The recently passed budget contained an additional \$89.7 million for community services, and \$176 million for the Department of Health's Early Intervention System, which acts as early identification and referral system providing service coordination, evaluation and intervention services for children from 0 to 3 years old with developmental delays and disabilities. We must continue to ensure we're meeting our moral obligation, including vouchers for housing, and as governor, I will continue to expand opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Whether it is state support for integrated and independent housing or promoting work and recreation activities, it is paramount we help individuals with special needs to live a full and prosperous life. I also believe we need to look for new opportunities to help advance the lives of people with I/DD. For example, I see the Career and Community Studies program at The College of New Jersey as another way to better the lives of people with special needs that can be replicated across the state. More individuals with intellectual disabilities could benefit from a higher education experience".

Democrat Phil Murphy's answer:

"As governor, I'm 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. I will work to better coordinate state services for people with disabilities. Currently, Trenton provides an array of disability-related programs, services, and support. 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. If elected, I would develop a new state plan that promotes integration in all walks of life and include people with disabilities in our policy-making decisions. I would also develop performance metrics and assessments so that the state and service providers are held accountable to their commitments. 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 top priority".

2017 ELECTION FOR THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

Q: The service delivery system is in the midst of a shift to fee-for-service. This means instead of contracts, community providers will bill Medicaid directly for each service they provide. Rates for this shift were developed a number of years ago and by the time the new system is up and running, they are likely to need updating. As Governor, what will you do to ensure current rates are adequate and that the system keeps up with inflation so services can be delivered consistently and with a high level of quality?

Republican Kim Guadagno's answer:

“With the state’s transition to Fee for Service, I’ve been hearing that providers are very concerned about getting paid when patients don’t show up for their appointments. With these changes, New Jersey’s mental health providers could lose up to \$6 million this year, which will force providers to reduce services or eliminate programs. I am concerned because providers should be focused on improving the lives of their patients, not worrying about if they’ll get paid for their hard work. And these changes shouldn’t result in patients losing services.

We must support providers during this transition with transitional aid if necessary, and get an honest report back on how the transition to fee for service is going in New Jersey. As governor, I will keep up to date on the periodic reports provided to me on the transition process. Most importantly, I will have an open-door policy as governor and listen to the needs and concerns of the disability community so that we can work collaboratively and constructively to make the transition a success”.

Democrat Phil Murphy's answer:

“Our state is in the midst of a significant transition from annual contracts to a fee-for-service model. I understand your concerns about this transition, and you should know that I am watching this issue closely. I am glad that a law was recently passed establishing independent boards to monitor the transition and ensure that the fee-for-service reimbursements are adequate”.

2017 ELECTION FOR THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

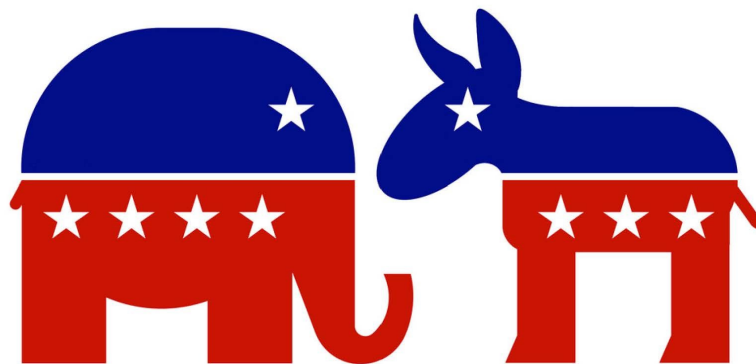
Q: Direct Support Professionals are the hands-on supports for people with I/DD living in the community but with an average starting salary of just \$10.50 an hour, community providers are facing a hiring and retention crisis of these critically-important staff. What would you do as Governor to help stabilize this essential workforce that provides assistance to people with I/DD?

Republican Kim Guadagno's answer:

“I believe Direct Support Professionals are crucial in assisting individuals with I/DD and are unsung heroes in our state. I would support an increase in state funding for Direct Support Professionals to help increase salaries. Even a relatively small state increase will trigger a federal match via Medicaid“.

Democrat Phil Murphy's answer:

“I understand that Direct Support Professionals provide invaluable services and critical one-on-one care to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities integrate into their communities and achieve greater independence. I have consistently supported raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over a period of time. I believe that wages to Direct Support Professionals need to go up, and I also recognize that reimbursement rates for institutions that pay these wages need to go up as well”.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS - WHY I VOTE!

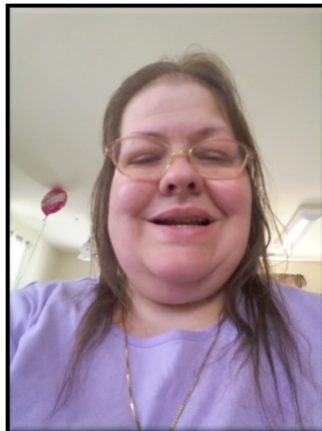
Seth Shaffer, *Self-Advocate*



"Now more than ever, because of the situation we're facing, I really believe that we can improve our situation by voting for a governor who is more sympathetic to our needs. Twenty-seven years ago, every person with an I/DD was given rights. It was our Independence Day. It is important to make sure we vote because that is how we express what we truly want in politics and what we need in life".

-Seth S.

Anita Clavering, *Self-Advocate*



"My motivation to vote is that it makes me feel like a citizen who wants to get involved in the community. It is important for me to be aware and informed on all the issues and form a relationship with public officials by working together on supporting and presenting bills and legislation that will benefit and help people. My advice for self-advocates is to be aware of issues that impact your lives such as health care, raising wages for DSP's, and the economy. I also encourage everyone to support your public officials who are working on promoting the issues we would vote on".

-Anita C.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS - WHY I VOTE!

Kathy Mullery, *Parent*



“I have always thought that voting was my responsibility as a citizen. As soon as I turned 18 I registered, took a little more interest in issues in my community, statewide and nationally, and voted regularly. Voting was – still is, one way that I can use my voice and express my support for issues that are important to me.

When Chris was born, my commitment to voting grew stronger. As Chris’ mom, I faced issues related to his health, his health insurance, and his rights and entitlements in the special education system. More than ever, I knew that those seeking office needed to know how their decisions would affect Chris and others like him. I took nothing for granted. Now that Chris will soon be 21, I still don’t; voting seems more important than ever.

When Chris turned 18, he registered to vote, too; he wanted to! I shared with him the issues that are affecting him now and those that will continue to affect him into his future. As an adult, when he transitions out of school, his insurance coverage, adequate funding for the services he needs, a fair, living wage for his direct support professionals and the means to meet his housing needs will all be critical. Together we need to make sure that every local, state and national politician knows how vital these issues are. We need to educate them. And we need to vote”.

-Kathy M.



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MAKE IT
COUNT**



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