

POLITICO

## New Jersey Playbook

*Matt Friedman's must-read briefing on the Garden State's important news of the day*

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## New Jersey's Census surprise

By **MATT FRIEDMAN** | 04/27/2021 07:00 AM EDT

Presented by Pre-K Our Way

### Good Tuesday morning!

**If United Van Lines conducted the Census**, New Jersey would be in trouble. But apparently there's a federal agency called the Census Bureau whose job it is to count people. And despite the moving company's annual survey that consistently shows the Garden State having the highest out-migration rate in the nation, the Census Bureau revealed something very different.

**New Jersey's population, according to the 2020 Census, is 9.29 million.** The Census Bureau estimated the state's population in 2019 at 8.82 million — a very modest increase from the official count of 8.79 million in 2010. But the latest count shows a gain of just under 500,000 since 2010, or a roughly 5.7 percent growth rate. That ranks New Jersey below the national average for rate of growth, but well above average for the region.

**New Jersey will keep its 12 House seats and 14 electoral votes.** That's not a surprise, even if there may have been some fear that the count would turn out worse than expected. There will be no 2020 version of the epic Bill Pascrell vs. Steve Rothman primary. But we'll

have to hear our neighbors in New York and Pennsylvania grouse about each losing a House seat (New York wouldn't have to if it had managed to keep just 89 more people!).

**There's a lot we don't know yet about New Jersey's population count.** Detailed figures have yet to be released. But what's clear is that politicians and news outlets now have some hard data that removes the need to keep citing that moving company survey, which most often has been used to back up claims that high taxes are driving people out of the state. And while Gov. Murphy is already celebrating, it also means the percent of the state's population that's fully vaccinated drops slightly.

**WHERE'S MURPHY** — In Hillsborough for an 11 a.m. groundbreaking ceremony, then in cyberspace for a virtual town hall at 5 p.m.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** — Dawson boyfriend **Cory Booker**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:** “People don't like to get involved in difficult things, especially when all the police unions arrayed against it.” — State Sen. **Loretta Weinberg** (D-Bergen) [on police reform legislation](#)

**BALLOT CHALLENGE OF THE DAY:** Try to find the non-Democratic machine backed candidates for Camden mayor [on the city's primary ballot](#) (sorry that the image is slightly blurry).

**CORONAVIRUS TRACKER** — 1,247 newly-reported positive PCR tests for a total of 865,700. 19 more deaths for a total of 25,399 confirmed or presumed deaths. 1,797 hospitalized, 398 in intensive care. 2,819,226 fully vaccinated, or about 30.4 percent of the population.

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A message from Pre-K Our Way:

**Thanks**, Governor and Legislature! **Pre-k expansion** funding's been in **every** recent state budget! Working families in 150+ school districts have pre-k expansion – but families in 110+ districts still wait. They're waiting in rural, suburban and suburban communities – from east to west, north to south. **Continue substantial** pre-k expansion **THIS YEAR!** Visit [prekourway.org](http://prekourway.org).

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## WHAT TRENTON MADE

### **BRENT SPINER CONTINUES TO DETERMINE DATES — Murphy boosts limits on outdoor gatherings, eases restrictions on indoor catered events, by**

**POLITICO’s Katherine Landergan and Sam Sutton:** New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy announced Monday that he’s increasing outdoor gathering limits and easing restrictions on indoor catered events. Under the changes, which take effect May 10, limits on outdoor gatherings will increase from 200 people to 500 people. Outdoor capacity limits at venues such as MetLife Stadium will also increase. The current limit is 30 percent capacity for venues with at least 2,500 fixed seats. Capacity will increase to 50 percent for venues with 1,000 fixed seats or more — so long as there’s 6 feet between groups.

### **LEADING BY EXAMPLE: JAMEL HOLLEY STILL A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE — “Serious COVID risk remains for NJ nursing home residents as employees lag in vaccinations,” by The Record’s Linda Washburn and Scott Fallon:**

“Vaccination rates for COVID-19 among the staff at New Jersey’s long-term care facilities vary widely, but are too low at many facilities to prevent future outbreaks of the disease that has claimed more than 8,020 staff and resident lives so far at such facilities — more than one-third of the state’s pandemic deaths. The first data on vaccination rates at the state’s 586 nursing homes and assisted living facilities shows that, on average, 55.7% of staff is vaccinated, along with 84.6% of residents. ‘It appears efforts to provide access and education to long-term care health care providers are falling short of what we had hoped,’ said Melissa O’Connor, a professor at Villanova University’s nursing school, whose work focuses on geriatrics. The snapshot of vaccination rates, from data reported by the nursing homes for April 21, underscores the challenges that remain — for both long-term care and the public at large — in overcoming vaccine hesitancy to reach a level of immunity that will slow and ultimately stop the pandemic’s spread.”

### **1 MCKINSEY = 2.95 MASTROS — “After years of cutbacks, NJ health officials say they need more staff,” by NJ Spotlight News’ Lilo Stainton:**

“By the end of this month New Jersey will have paid nearly \$26.6 million to the consulting giant McKinsey & Company for its help in developing a pandemic response plan, collecting and analyzing reams of data, shoring up long-term care facilities, building out the state’s contact tracing process and rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine program. With far fewer employees than in years past, the state has not been able to do all the work in house, officials note, and they are now seeking to fill some of the gaps. This includes Gov. Phil Murphy planning to spend an additional \$1.37 million for disease surveillance and data collection, reporting and analysis within the state Department of Health’s Communicable Disease Service, an office that has played a key role in the response to the pandemic. State health commissioner Judy Persichilli told lawmakers during a budget

committee hearing Wednesday that this funding would allow the DOH to create a new unit that would build on the work done by analysts in the department, and more effectively coordinate and study data.”

**33.3 INANIMATE CARBON MASTROS — “N.J. nuclear plants may get \$300M bailout renewed. If they do, you’ll keep footing the bill,” by NJ Advance Media’s Amanda Hoover:** “The Board of Public Utilities will decide Tuesday if it will continue to award hundreds of millions in subsidies to PSE&G, the operator of New Jersey’s three nuclear power plants. And if it does, you’ll see the money come out of your pocket — even if you’re not a PSE&G customer. The question before the board is whether or not the power company needs the money as nuclear plants become increasingly less profitable. Critics and consumer advocates say the company should take the financial hit itself, but PSE&G insists the plants present a situation so dire it will be forced to shutter them without assistance. A shutdown would put New Jersey farther from its carbon-neutral energy goals.”

**NEW JERSEYANS DEMAND TO KNOW POLISTINA’S STANCE ON CARBONATED BEVERAGES — “Polistina declines online debate against Grossman in GOP State Senate primary race,” by The Press of Atlantic City’s Michelle Brunetti Post:** “Republican primary State Senate candidate Vince Polistina, of Egg Harbor Township, has declined to participate in a planned May 11 debate against his GOP opponent Seth Grossman, of Atlantic City, an organizer confirmed Monday. The debate is now cancelled, said John Froomjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. Polistina could not immediately be reached for comment. ‘I think my opponent made a mistake,’ Grossman said in a press statement Sunday.”

**DEVINE PROVENANCE? — “McCormick, Devine told to pull fabricated quote or face legal action,” by New Jersey Globe’s David Wildstein:** “Lisa McCormick and James Devin are being accused of fabricating a racist quote from State Sen. Joseph Cryan’s campaign manager, A.J. Stewart, on a menacing website they run. ‘As you know that ‘quote’ is a complete fabrication intended solely to defame Mr. Stewart,’ attorney Bill Northgrave wrote to McCormick and Devine in a cease and desist letter today. ‘In fact, Mr. Stewart never spoke to you or anyone related or connected to njtoday.net.’”

—**“Treasury reveals pension fund still holds stake in gunmaker”**

—**“Gay, Black and forced out onto the streets. Why COVID is leaving some men homeless in N.J.”**

—**“NJ to expand driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants May 1. Here's how it will work”**

—Steinberg: “Biden’s recognition of the Armenian massacre as a genocide: A lifetime goal of Jersey’s Chuck Haytaian”

—Lefkovic: “Is New Jersey’s progressive movement dead or dying?”

—Egea: “Our tolls are paying for NJ Transit’s failures”

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## BIDEN TIME

**THE KIMPOSSIBLE DREAM — Andy Kim is taking on the daunting task of recruiting Asian Americans for office, by POLITICO’s Katherine Landergan and Daniel Han:** Rep. Andy Kim was deep in thought when he retraced the path of the gunman who killed eight people last month near Atlanta. He’d made the trip south less than two weeks after the attacks and drove the 40 minutes between the first spa the shooter stormed and the second. The New Jersey congressman left with few doubts about what motivated the crime. He didn't come to a novel conclusion, but it was no less devastating a realization after authorities insisted the gunman didn't commit a hate crime even though six of the eight victims were of Asian descent: “It was a very deliberate, targeted effort to go after Asian American businesses,” Kim said. It became personal when Kim spoke with the victim’s families. He said hearing them describe their now-deceased Korean American mothers — how they worked hard to cook and provide for their families — reminded him of his own. “This is a very historic moment,” Kim, a Democrat, said in a phone interview ... Kim, who is 38 and the first Asian American lawmaker to represent New Jersey in Congress, is using his heartache to animate a leadership PAC he quietly opened in October to recruit Asian Americans and other candidates of color to run for political office.

**BIG IMPLICATIONS FOR NJ — “Supreme Court to hear case on carrying guns in public,” by The New York Times’ Adam Liptak:** “The Supreme Court said on Monday that it would review a New York law that imposes strict limits on carrying guns outside the home, setting the stage for its first major Second Amendment case in more than a decade ... The Supreme Court has turned down countless Second Amendment appeals since it established an individual right to keep guns in the home for self-defense in 2008 in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. Since then, lower courts have generally sustained gun control laws. But they are divided on the fundamental and open question posed by the new case: whether states can stop law-abiding citizens from carrying guns outside their homes for self-defense unless they can satisfy the authorities that they have a good reason for doing so ... The new case is a challenge to a New York law that requires people seeking a license to carry a gun outside their

homes to show a 'proper cause.' Two men denied licenses, along with the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, sued, saying 'the state makes it virtually impossible for the ordinary law-abiding citizen to obtain a license.' California, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island have similar laws, according to gun rights groups.”

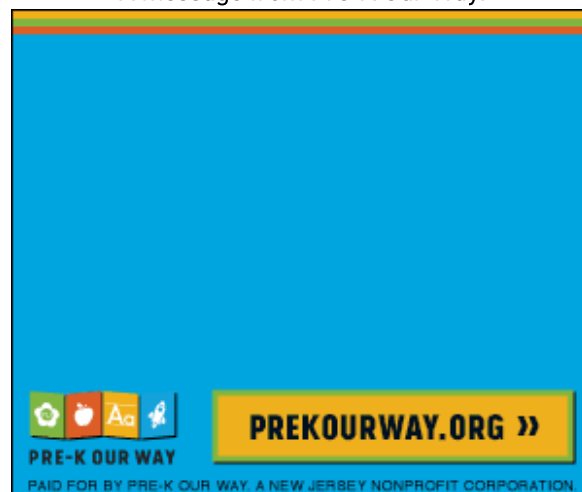
—**Menendez, Booker outline infrastructure plan’s benefits for New Jersey**

—**“Menendez eviscerates the critics of Hudson County”**

—**“Pallotta wants another crack at Gottheimer”**

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A message from Pre-K Our Way:



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## LOCAL

**HUGHES NEWS — “Records: Indicted ex-Hughes loyalist was pressured to campaign to keep his job,” by The Trentonian’s Isaac Avilucea and Sulaiman Abdur-Raham:** “Kevin Bannon plans to sing like a canary at trial. It’s been nearly four years since the former Mercer County Park Commission boss was indicted on public-corruption charges in October 2017. He’s accused of diverting thousands of dollars of public money to a nonprofit, the Friends of Mercer County Parks, for which prosecutors say he controlled the purse strings ... General’s Office, is expected to take the stand at his trial and spill about what it was like working under County Executive Hughes. His attorney said prosecutors offered to waive a five-year mandatory minimum if Bannon pleaded guilty to a single count and made

about \$2,700 in restitution. Bannon rejected the offer and has foreshadowed what he might say on the stand in tell-all filings, claiming he was required to use his connections to solicit donations for the Democratic powerbroker's re-election efforts. He says he was required to buy as many as 30 tickets to Hughes' fundraisers, including his annual State of the County address, to keep his job."

**ATTENTION NICK SACCO — “Former Gloucester Township cop sentenced to 4 years in prison for slapping a 13-year-old girl,” by The Philadelphia Inquirer’s Julie Shaw:** “A Camden County judge on Monday sentenced a former South Jersey police officer to four years in state prison for slapping a 13-year-old girl in the face while trying to arrest her at a group home in 2018 during an incident that was captured on police body-camera video. Superior Court Judge Edward McBride stayed the sentence for John Flinn, 30, a former Gloucester Township police officer, in case the Camden County Prosecutor’s Office decides to appeal his sentence. Flinn remains out of custody on his own recognizance. Flinn’s conviction on an official-misconduct charge carried a mandatory minimum prison term of five years. But McBride granted a request by defense attorney Louis Barbone to waive the mandatory term, finding ‘clearly and convincingly, that extraordinary circumstances exist,’ and said the imposition of a five-year sentence ‘would be a serious injustice.’”

**BEER BATTERED — “N.J. vice principal tossed beer at diners as wife complained of transgender woman using bathroom,” by NJ Advance Media’s Kevin Shea and Matt Gray:** “A vice principal at a Monmouth County school is under investigation after a social media post shows him angrily throwing a cup of beer at restaurant patrons in Atlantic County this past weekend. The drink toss by Michael Smurro occurred after his wife argued with patrons over an apparent transgender woman using the women’s bathroom with her at the restaurant, Fred & Ethel’s Lantern Light and Tavern in Smithville, Galloway Township on Saturday ... Smurro is a vice principal at Neptune Middle School, in Neptune Township. The district’s superintendent, Tami Crader, said Monday morning she’d just learned of the incident and it is under investigation, ‘and will be taken seriously.’”

—“Garden State or Warehouse State? Jackson project could spur changes in NJ law”

—“Newark police have new arrest policy: Minor offenses get written up”

—“Jersey City police unions suing city, council over resolution supporting creation of CCRB”

—“Trenton district sues to get teachers to return to school over COVID-19 strike”

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## EVERYTHING ELSE

**ANTI-ASIAN HATE — “I’m terrified’: Anti-Asian hate crimes jumped 74% in New Jersey last year,” by The Asbury Park Press’ Joshua Chung:** “As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the state and the country last year, the number of anti-Asian bias incidents — which includes shunning, racial slurs and physical attacks — went up by nearly 75% within the past year, data released by the New Jersey State Police show. COVID-19’s origin in Wuhan, China, has caused a significant backlash against Asian Americans across the United States for the past year and New Jersey has seen its fair share of discrimination toward Asian Americans, said U.S. Rep. Andy Kim, an Asian American Democrat representing New Jersey’s 3rd Congressional District.”

**TAYLOR SHAM — “Whatever it is, it’s not very good”: The strange, incredible case of the \$100 million deli,” by Michael Linhorst for Fast Company:**

“Hometown’s eye-popping market cap can’t be explained by its sales. The deli’s revenue, never spectacular, has fallen each of the last four years, from a high of \$76,213 in 2016 to \$13,976 last year, when it closed for several months because of the pandemic. Yet even those numbers sound generous. ‘I’ve never been there,’ said Tina Kauffman, who lives two doors down. ‘I’ve lived here five years, and it’s never open.’ ... But even as everyone seemed to agree there was something fishy going on, no one could say just what it was. Was this a Jersey version of the recent SPAC craze, in which investors form a blank-check company to take a private business public? Could it be some sort of money laundering scheme? Or perhaps another GameStop, a meme stock whose rise defies rationality? I pored over Hometown’s legal filings, then headed down the Jersey Turnpike to try to find out ... Paul Morina, the high school principal and wrestling coach, is a celebrity around Paulsboro ... He spent six years on the borough council, and his brother is the county sheriff ... Coach Morina is also the president of Hometown and has been since the company’s inception in 2014, which is likely one of the reasons so few locals want to discuss it. According to public filings, Morina’s stake in the company is worth nearly \$20 million. The deli’s vice president, Christine Lindenmuth, is identified as a math teacher at the same high school.”

**INSERT PROPERTY TAX JOKE HERE — “Should you have the right to sell your organs? Bergen man challenges longtime U.S. ban,” by The Record’s Tom Nobile:**

“John Bellocchio would gladly give you his kidney, but only at the right price. The North Jersey native is dedicated enough to that position to take on the U.S. government. He sued the Justice Department in federal court earlier this month demanding the right to sell his own organs. The practice has been banned in the country for decades. But Bellocchio’s suit challenges a 37-year-old federal statute for ‘infringing on his freedom to contract and for interfering with his say in what he does with his personal property.’”



## — “Murder in the desert A N.J. family sought a fresh start in New Mexico. Now 5 are dead and questions remain”

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A message from Pre-K Our Way:

Thanks to the Governor and Legislature, there’s been pre-k expansion funding in every recent state budget! That’s enabled NJ to expand pre-k for working families into 150+ school districts.

However, families in 110+ eligible districts still wait in rural, suburban and urban communities, and from east to west – and north to south.

The proposed FY2022 budget would continue to recognize pre-k expansion as a priority for now, and for our future. We agree with former Governor Tom Kean, “There are a few priority reforms we need to make to improve education in our state. One of our highest priorities should be the availability of quality pre-k programs for all of our children. These programs offer our best hope for future success in school and life.”

Let’s maintain pre-k expansion as a statewide priority. **Continue substantial pre-k expansion in the coming year for New Jersey, and especially for its working families.**

Visit [prekourway.org](http://prekourway.org).

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