



**New Jersey
Working Families Alliance
2017 Platform**

New Jersey Working Families Summit
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Preamble</u>	Page 1
<u>Tax Fairness and Responsible Revenue Raising</u>	Page 1
Restructuring the Income Tax	
Making Corporations Pay Their Fair Share	
Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share	
Taxing “Non-Work” Wealth	
Recapturing Matching Federal Dollars	
Creating New Sources of Revenue	
Strengthening the Power of Statutory Dedication	
<u>Economic Justice</u>	Page 3
Adopting a \$15 Minimum Wage for All Workers	
Protecting Workers from Wage Theft	
Investing in Workers	
Enacting Statewide Earned Sick Leave	
Ensuring Equal Pay for Equal Work	
Promoting Workplace Stability	
Protecting Pensions for Public Employees	
Making Housing More Affordable	
Increasing Funding Rental Assistance Programs	
Expanding Resources to Prevent Foreclosures	
Ensuring an Equitable and Sustainable Hurricane Sandy Recovery	
Fully Funding NJ Transit	
Holding the Line on NJ Transit Fares	
Expanding Public Transportation in Urban Areas	
<u>Civil Rights and Democracy</u>	Page 6
Transforming Police Practices	
Ending Mass Incarceration	
Reforming Drug Policy	
Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline	
Protecting Women’s Reproductive Rights	
Guaranteeing Rights for LGBTQ Communities	
Guaranteeing Rights for Immigrants	
Modernizing Elections and Expanding the Right to Vote	
<u>Environmental Justice</u>	Page 9
Reducing Emissions in Vulnerable Communities	
Adopting Cumulative Impact Ordinances	
Making Pollution Information Publicly Available	
Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Vulnerable Communities	
Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Maximizing Alternative Energy Sources	
Combating Lead in Our Schools and Homes	
Adopting Stricter Drinking Water Standards	
Protecting Access to Water	
Updating the Water Supply Master Plan and Advancing New Source Water Protections	
Enacting Funding Mechanisms for Environmental Priorities	

Education

- Expanding Preschool Education
- Expanding Full-Day Kindergarten to All Districts
- Reducing Class Sizes
- Develop Professional Learning Communities
- Ensuring Standardized Testing is Fair and Equitable
- Creating a Predictable Path to Local Control of Districts
- Fully Funding and Adhering to the School Funding Reform Act

2017 NEW JERSEY WORKING FAMILIES ALLIANCE PLATFORM

Preamble

NJ Working Families, its partners, and allies have convened to create a roadmap that addresses the rising inequality that plagues New Jersey working families. Working in collaboration with affiliates and organizations from across issue areas and regions of the state, we seek to develop a policy platform that promotes justice and equity. Centered around the issue areas of Tax Fairness, Economic Justice, Education, Civil Rights, and Environmental Justice, the aim is to identify key problems that perpetuate inequality across New Jersey and develop a list of goals that can retake the Garden State for the working class. By no means a comprehensive list, the following represents a set of goals that adopting organizations commit to help advocate for as they pursue their respective organizational goals.

Tax Fairness and Responsible Revenue Raising

Across New Jersey, working families have felt the double pinch of a tax structure that places them on the hook for more, while settling for less in order to grant the wealthy and well-connected tax break after tax break. The result has been a crippled state in which obligations cannot be met, and planning for the future is almost impossible. This inequity not only hurts working families who struggle to make ends meet, but slowly curtails the state's ability to invest and thrive in the areas that make it enticing to residents and business alike, including: education, transportation and the environment. Raising revenue must be a priority of the next administration if we are to reset the state onto a path of growth and justice.

Restructuring the Income Tax

Under the current administration, New Jersey has seen a steady decrease of tax liabilities and obligations given to corporations and the wealthy, while there has been a steady increase in fees and taxes or a severe reduction of services for most working families. Today, the average New Jerseyan pays a greater percentage of their income and assets in taxes while the goods and services government provides have been diminished, while wealth and income of the well-off continues to grow, despite paying less in taxes. We must restructure the New Jersey income tax structure so that the wealthy pay their fair share. This can include the implementation of additional income tax brackets, the adoption of a "super wealthy" tax bracket, the reinstatement of the "millionaires tax" or other combinations and variations similar to the California model.

Making Corporations Pay Their Fair Share

We must institute more stringent and transparent corporate tax mandates that ensure corporations are paying their fair share, that bad actors aren't benefiting from public funds, and that a true cost-benefit analysis is conducted before granting or renewing tax incentive programs. This includes ensuring that

when private employers benefit from public funds, the jobs created pay living wages and benefits that do not undercut private sector wage and benefit standards. The state should utilize the opportunity created by the sunset of the GROW NJ and ERG programs in 2019 in order to ensure these measures are more firmly connected to overall budget objectives.

Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share

It is time to create greater tax equity amongst all workers in the state, by ensuring that high wage earners and low wage earners pay a comparable percent of their income in state and local taxes. This can include expanding the state payroll tax in order to capture the higher incomes of the higher wage earners, exploring a “wealth tax”, expanding the sales tax to include more services used by wealthier residents, restructuring the collection of property taxes to take into account ownership percentage, underwater mortgages and the like.

Taxing “Non-Work” Wealth

We seek parity and equity for inherited, bequeathed wealth, and non “work” wealth. This includes taxing the carried interest income of hedge fund and private equity partnerships, the reversal of the elimination of the estate tax and/or the expansion of the inheritance tax in order to ensure all are paying their fair share.

Recapturing Matching Federal Dollars

Repeatedly, the current administration has failed to maximize the power of the “multiplier effect” of several government grant and subsidy programs. Although “ideological” reasons may have been cited for some, the reality is that poor management, tracking and execution are to blame in several instances. Previously, state agencies retained an “intergovernmental” liaison that ensured departments were actively seeking and submitting applications for federal dollars. The failure to do so has often resulted in the cutting of state funding and the resulting loss of matching federal funds in key areas like health care, environmental protection, poverty reduction and more. The new administration should reinstate department-level liaisons to the federal government to apply for and track federal grants. It must also ensure the state is meeting all obligations for the full receipt of matching funds as they relate to environmental programs and remediation.

Creating New Sources of Revenue

New Jersey will face an increasing fiscal crisis if it continues down a path of limited revenue generation and tax breaks for the very wealthy and connected. Reversing course on previous mistakes is critical, but so is exploring new and creative sources of revenue for the state. We call on New Jersey to create a tax task force to explore additional areas of revenue generation and projections. Areas include the legalization and taxation of marijuana beyond medicinal use, instituting a carbon tax, full assessment of natural resource damage and corresponding legal claims/settlements with major polluters to recover value of lost use of natural resources due to the pollution. Under the current administration, high profile cases have been either ignored or settled for pennies on the dollar. Further, the polluter pays principle should be applied to carbon pollution to accurately reflect its true costs to the environment,

public health and society. It shouldn't be left unregulated. Low-income communities face a clear disparate impact from air pollution and climate impacts, and our poorest environmental justice communities have the most to lose from climate impacts. Any revenue from any carbon reduction program (e.g., carbon tax) must go primarily to energy efficiency programs and emission reductions, with a strong focus on prioritizing low-income neighborhoods, especially socially vulnerable, environmentally impacted and historically disadvantaged communities of color

Strengthening the Power of Statutory Dedication

Statutorily dedicated funds from clean energy to unemployment insurance are too often raided on an annual basis. In response, constitutional dedication has been used too often and is too inflexible. A better balance between these two status quo extremes is needed. To achieve this, the next administration should instill fiscal discipline, such that statutorily dedicated funds go to their intended purpose, are held in reserve until needed for that purpose, or are returned to the generator of said funds. It should also push for constitutional amendment to make it harder to raid statutorily dedicated funds without going so far as to outright prohibit it, e.g., requiring each raid to be authorized in advance with a stand alone super majority vote ($\frac{2}{3} > \frac{3}{5}$).

Economic Justice

New Jersey's working families have seen increasing economic instability in recent years, in part due to policies that fail to improve take home income, job protections, or mitigate barriers to fair housing, affordable transportation, and equitable education. The pathway towards greater economic justice in New Jersey will require a comprehensive plan to ensure family sustaining wages and fair workplace policies, but also access to quality housing, transportation, and education. Our economic justice platform calls for policies that will improve access and equity for New Jersey's working families. These measures go beyond workplace policies and delve into housing, transportation and systemic issues that lock families into a never-ending cycle of poverty.

Adopting a \$15 Minimum Wage for All Workers

According to a report by New Jersey Policy Perspective, 1 in 4 workers in the state would receive a pay increase, and over a quarter of them are parents. In all, more than 400,000 children – 21 percent of all kids in New Jersey – have at least one parent who would benefit from increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Raising their wages creates the potential for a massive economic stimulus when these workers purchase goods, retain their homes, and care for their families. Given that New Jersey's low-wage workforce is older, more diverse, and more educated than ever before, it is critical that any increase in the minimum wage apply to all New Jersey workers.

Investing in Workers

State government should systematically and strategically use its investments to raise up working families. State economic development strategy should also adopt higher standards for all publicly contracted work by way of promoting standard wage and benefits. It should also ensure that only businesses that provide good jobs are incentivized with public funds.

Protecting Workers From Wage Theft

Raising the minimum wage can have a significant macro level positive impact on the state, however, these efforts can be undermined by the actions of unscrupulous employers who routinely fail to pay their employees for hours worked. The practice of wage theft is most rampant amongst low-wage workers, making the need to move a strong wage enforcement bill a necessity. Following best practices from across the country, wage and hour regulations should be strengthened by increasing penalties for engaging in wage theft, extending the statute of limitation, and enhancing protections against retaliation.

Enacting Statewide Earned Sick Leave

New Jersey should guarantee a minimum standard of earned sick days for all workers. No one should have to choose between caring for themselves and loved ones and getting a paycheck. While a number of states and cities - including 13 municipalities in New Jersey - have implemented earned sick days for their workers, there is currently no Federal or NJ State law that guarantees earned sick days. Approximately 1.2 million workers in New Jersey (38%) do not have access to a single earned sick day. By not having earned sick days, these workers are more likely to go to work sick, putting the health of their co-workers and public at risk. Guaranteed earned sick days for all would promote a healthier workforce, healthier businesses and a healthier New Jersey.

Ensuring Equal Pay for Equal Work

Women make up nearly half of New Jersey's workforce yet make only 80 cents for every dollar a man makes for equal work. The pay gap for African-American and Latina women is even greater, with African-American women earning 64 cents and Latina women earning 56 cents for every dollar earned by a white non-Hispanic man. Equal pay is just as much about economic survival as it is about justice and equal rights. Women are increasingly working in jobs historically occupied by men, and they are a growing number of breadwinners in their families. This is not only a women's issue, but also a family issue. New Jersey can make great strides in ensuring equal pay by ending the practice of asking employees to sign contracts swearing they will never speak of their compensation, and clarifying that workers may legally disclose their compensation to co-workers. Additionally, New Jersey must strengthen the legal standard supporting women who take their discrimination cases to court by emphasizing actual work responsibilities over job titles, ensuring that companies cannot hide discriminatory pay behind different or inaccurate job titles.

Promoting Workplace Stability

Unfair and unpredictable work schedules create enormous challenges for workers trying to balance responsibilities at home and on the job. When workers do not know when they are scheduled to work, or for how many hours - often referred to as "just in time scheduling" - they have a difficult time managing basic expenses, arranging for child care, continuing their education, getting a second job, or pursuing job training. Predictable scheduling creates a minimum standard that protects not only the interests of workers, but businesses as well, by preventing a race to the bottom from "just in time scheduling."

Protecting Pensions for Public Employees

New Jersey currently has the worst-funded public pension system in the country. It has been two decades since the state has made a full pension payment. This deliberate neglect has resulted in numerous credit rating cuts, and consequently, higher borrowing costs relative to other state

governments. In 2011, New Jersey enacted sweeping benefits reform that called for increased contributions to the pension system by both the state and current workers. While workers have been paying more of their paychecks into the pension system, the state has reneged on its side of the deal. The decision to not fund the pension system is a political one, as the money would be there if it were not given to millionaires and corporations in the form of big tax breaks. We call for fully funding the state's pension system and regular quarterly payments.

Making Housing More Affordable

Our state has a tremendous need for homes people can afford. New Jersey is the fifth most expensive state to rent a two-bedroom apartment. A family needs to earn over \$26/ hour to afford a modest 2 bedroom apartment. We are also at the top of the list of states with both foreclosures and zombie foreclosures. More millennials are living at home longer in NJ than anywhere else in America. For lower income workers the situation is even worst. About 75% of very low income families pay over their income for housing costs. Since 2009 state funds for production of affordable homes have been virtually eliminated. In order to build a Thriving NJ, the state must invest \$125 million in production as it did in the past. The NJ Special Needs Housing Trust Fund, which began in 2005 with \$200 million, ran out of money in 2011. Nearly 17 percent of New Jersey families headed by a person with disabilities live in poverty, and more than half of adults with disabilities are unable to work, or cannot find employment. The NJ Special Needs Housing Trust Fund should be refunded at \$45 million/year.

Increasing Funding for State Rental Assistance Programs

The New Jersey State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) has been level funded at about \$40 million for about the past 10 years. About 4,000 people benefit from this program. The need rental assistance has continued to grow. More very-low-income families (those with an income below \$25,000/year for a family of four) can't afford their rent. People living on fixed income cannot afford rentals anywhere in New Jersey so they double up or become homeless. There is a growing body of research showing a direct link between "housing security" and physical/mental health, depression, behavioral, and school problems among children, etc., as well as demonstrating the ultimate costs of these problems to society. In order to build a Thriving NJ, the state needs to increase SRAP to \$75 million/year with the money coming from the general fund.

Expanding Resources to Prevent Foreclosures

While the rest of the nation is recovering, foreclosure continue to be a major problem in NJ. Over 70,000 properties are in the foreclosure process in the State. Statewide foreclosures make up 1.97% of the total properties in the state. This puts NJ as the highest percentage of foreclosures in the nation. To complete the foreclosure process in NJ takes 3 ½ years. Funding for rental, homeownership and foreclosure counseling services do exist at the state level; those resources have come entirely from the federal government and the private sector. In order to build a Thriving NJ, the state needs to invest in foreclosure counseling to help people stay in their homes and create a program to lower the remaining principal owed on a mortgage to an amount reflective of current market realities. People who lose their home due to foreclosure should be able to stay in that home as a renter until it is sold. Additionally we should use already foreclosed homes where possible to address the need for a affordable home.

Ensuring an Equitable and Sustainable Sandy Recovery

According to the State of NJ, September 30, 2016 report of the 7,995 eligible LMI and RREM participants, only 3,640 or less than half, have received a certificate of occupancy to move back in their

home! In addition, there are thousands of additional Sandy survivors who were not eligible for RREM or waitlisted. In order to build a Thriving NJ, the state needs to immediately pass legislation to protect these people from losing their home due to foreclosure (A33/S2300). It also needs to pass legislation (S532/A1340) protecting these homeowners from unscrupulous contractors.

Fully Funding NJ Transit

New Jersey's transportation system is in a state of crisis, even with the renewal of the Transportation Trust Fund. Car ownership and its attached costs remains a remarkably high cost of low-income and middle-income household, and a significant barrier to entering and remaining in the labor force. To fix this structural issue, the new gubernatorial administration should fully fund NJ Transit through the General Fund, as opposed to continuing budget raids and shortchanging the core budget. It must also stop the raids of NJ Transit's capital budget to fund its operating budget – the Christie Administration has done this continually, which has led to a legacy of breakdowns of both buses and trains.

Holding the Line on NJ Transit Fares

With additional parking constraints in urban neighborhoods, mass transit remains the most affordable way to travel in the Garden State. However, too many families are paying the most expensive transit fares in America for less transit service, and are increasingly reliant on an unreliable and fundamentally unsafe system. We call on the new administration to pledge not to raise fares for NJ Transit riders, who have seen the elimination of off-peak fares, and historic fare hikes.

Expanding Public Transportation in Urban Areas

New Jersey should expand bus service in urban areas to bust the hub and spoke model, which makes it difficult to travel around cities, as opposed to just in and out of them. Additionally, to ensure that commuters always have an active voice in official NJ Transit decisions, two public and voting commuting members should be added to the NJ Transit board.

Civil Rights and Democracy

A democracy can only thrive when all of the people have an interest in its success. Too often, systematic injustice, discrimination, disenfranchisement, and other violations of civil rights and liberties undermine our ability to participate in--and have a stake in--our own success and the success of our communities. It is injustice that turns neighbor against neighbor and damages our ability to access education, work together, better ourselves economically, and accomplish the changes that are needed. Ensuring the right to vote, re-envisioning our broken criminal justice system and ending mass incarceration, eliminating discrimination, and ensuring equal treatment and opportunity under the law are key steps towards building a stronger, healthier, fairer New Jersey.

Transforming Police Practices

An absence of transparency and strong accountability measures have led to a troubling gulf between police and the communities they serve, particularly Black and brown New Jerseyans. We must build

towards police policies and practices that build trust and ensure that officers are held accountable for any wrongdoing. Specifically, New Jersey must implement strong policing transparency requirements about who officers stop, search, and arrest and for what reasons; improve training to ensure police respect New Jersey's diverse communities, including those with mental illness; expand independent oversight of police misconduct, including strong civilian review boards and independent prosecutors when police kill or seriously injure someone; end abusive civil asset forfeiture practices; deploy officer-worn cameras and ensure that the public has a right to access footage and that individuals' privacy is protected where appropriate; increase diversity in police departments throughout the state; end Broken Windows policing and build alternatives to police for low-level behavior, including expanded mental health, drug treatment, and social service responses.

Ending Mass Incarceration

While New Jersey has made important strides in recent years, we still incarcerate our residents at a rate higher than most countries in the world, and Black New Jerseyans are incarcerated at a rate 12.2 times higher than white New Jerseyans. We must end mass incarceration in a way that advances racial justice and bolsters public safety. Specifically, New Jersey must implement bail reform in a way that eliminates money bail and ensures people are never kept in jail pretrial because they are poor; end mandatory minimum sentencing practices that lead to overincarceration; fix our parole system to ensure more New Jerseyans are released from prison when they are eligible; strengthen and expand reentry programming to ensure New Jerseyans reintegrating after incarceration have the skills and opportunity to succeed; end solitary confinement abuse in prisons and jails; reduce reliance on and close juvenile justice facilities; and focus on ensuring our next Attorney General, County Prosecutors, and Parole Board members are committed to ending mass incarceration in New Jersey.

Reforming Drug Policy

It's time to shift our state's drug policy from a criminal justice focus to a public health one. Drug offenses still dominate New Jerseyans' involvement in the criminal justice system; that must come to an end. Currently, New Jerseyans are arrested for marijuana possession more than any other offense on the books, and Black New Jerseyans are arrested nearly three times more often for possession than white New Jerseyans, despite similar usage rates. Specifically, New Jersey must legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults; decriminalize low-level drug offenses; expand evidence-based drug education and abuse prevention efforts; significantly build non-coercive treatment capacity; and expand harm reduction efforts, including needle exchange programs, throughout the state.

Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Too often, harsh school disciplinary practices and police practices in schools contribute to dropouts and student involvement in the criminal justice system. We must work to ensure our schools are nurturing places conducive to learning and develop policies that recognize young people's mistakes should not lead to life-long consequences in the criminal justice system. Specifically, we must expand restorative justice practices in school discipline; ensure that police are only involved in schools when

serious public safety issues arise; expand capacity for counseling services in schools; and adopt policies to ensure student and parents' rights are secured in disciplinary proceedings.

Protecting Women's Reproductive Rights

The right to choose is a fundamental right; access to abortion services can be critical to the health and safety of women and their families throughout the state. New Jersey must fully restore funding for reproductive healthcare and make access to birth control easier for low-income and young women.

Guaranteeing Rights for LGBTQ Communities

While New Jersey has been a national leader in ending employment and housing discrimination against LGBTQ people, and the fight for marriage equality is over, there remains much work to do to ensure our state is equal, fair, and empowers our LGBTQ residents to live freely and healthily. Specifically, New Jersey must adopt policies to ensure transgender New Jerseyans can access state birth certificates that reflect their gender identity; require insurance companies to provide coverage for transition-related healthcare for transgender people; make sure transgender inmates are treated fairly and with dignity in New Jersey prisons and schools; advance further guidance to make sure New Jersey schools are free from discrimination and lift up LGBTQ students; combat housing challenges for homeless and elderly LGBTQ residents; and ensure that all New Jerseyans are able to use a bathroom and other facilities that align with their gender identity.

Guaranteeing Rights for Immigrants

Immigrant New Jerseyans are an integral part of the social, cultural and economic fabric of our state. It is important that we continue to support New Jersey's immigrant residents as full persons in society, regardless of legal status. Specifically, New Jersey must adopt policies that expand access to state driver's licenses and identification cards for undocumented New Jerseyans; ensure that undocumented New Jerseyans have access to state financial aid to pursue higher education opportunities; and end the local enforcement of immigration laws, including putting an end to agreements between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and local jails. New Jersey must also step up to the plate and take an affirmative role in the resettlement of refugees. We must also provide assistance to the 450,000 New Jerseyans who are legal residents who have not yet applied for citizenship.

Modernizing Elections and Expanding the Right to Vote

Voting is how we express our values, and New Jersey has the opportunity to embark on a path towards the expansion of voting rights and the modernization of elections. New Jersey can take affirmative action to ensure that the pinnacle of democracy is as inclusive as possible by adopting policies that strengthen oversight of the election process; re-enfranchise parolees and probationers; end prison-based gerrymandering; and grant non-citizens the right to vote in local elections.

Environmental Justice

Climate change is an imminent threat not only to the health and well being of our state, but also to the future prosperity of our economy. This is particularly critical in economically disadvantaged communities, who often bear the largest brunt of previous careless environmental public policies. Polluting facilities are frequently located in communities of color and low-income communities. These facilities have an adverse and disproportionate impact on the health of neighbors, as well as plant workers. The next Governor should ensure more meaningful participation by environmental justice (EJ) communities and workers in environmental decisions, and guarantee fairer treatment and equal protection under governmental laws, policies, and practices for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status.

Reducing Emissions in Vulnerable Communities

Any type of climate change mitigation policy should include mandatory emission reductions for environmental justice (EJ) communities, i.e. communities of color and low-income communities. In the case of the Clean Power Plan, the reductions for EJ communities should be at least 32%. Additionally, the state should increase and protect funding for DEP Brownfields and Superfund clean-up programs, particularly in EJ communities, to better address legacy pollution.

Adopting Cumulative Impact Ordinances

The state should adopt EJ and cumulative impact legislation or regulations that result in a reduction of legacy pollution in EJ communities. The regulations or legislation should contain a place-based policy that protects EJ communities from new sources of pollution and contains a mechanism that will decrease existing pollution. Under a set of defined circumstances, pollution permits should be denied or not renewed.

Making Pollution Information Publicly Available

Municipalities should adopt ordinances to make information publicly available, including information on: neighborhood demographics, existing sources of pollution and the type and amount of pollution they emit, environmental assets located in the locality, and on the type of and amount of pollution that will be produced by newly proposed commercial and industrial projects. Armed with this information, residents, staff, committees and governing bodies can make informed decisions on whether newly proposed industrial and commercial projects will have adverse environmental and cumulative impacts. The EJ and cumulative impacts ordinance recently adopted by Newark can serve as a model for such ordinances in other municipalities.

Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Vulnerable Communities

The use of, and funding for, energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) should be prioritized and incentivized in EJ communities. Ensuring the EJ communities have access to EE and RE will help fight climate change, improve air quality and, if implemented using an EJ lens, provide economic opportunities to these communities.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The state should pursue the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% from 2005 levels by 2050 in a socially just manner, ending raids on the Clean Energy Fund and committing to the expansion of renewables with prioritized investments, particularly in historically disadvantaged EJ communities. This can include a revised Energy Master Plan, with the aim to expand our Class I Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to meet the 30 percent by 2025 goal, 50% by 2035, and 80% by 2050 as a path to a 100% clean energy economy, including additional, clear interim enforceable benchmarks. The plan should also focus on achieving a 30 percent energy efficiency savings goal by 2030, including clear interim enforceable benchmarks for 2020 and 2025. A full evaluation of policy proposals that comply with the Global Warming Response Act is warranted, including efforts to tackle carbon from the transportation, heating and cooling, and industrial sectors.

Maximizing Alternative Energy Sources

Maximization of alternative energy sources, particularly wind energy. Six years ago, Governor Christie signed the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act (OWEDA), but since then he has repeatedly blocked efforts to ensure we have wind turbines off our coast. Delaying offshore wind projects costs our state jobs, renewable energy, and venture capital investments. Offshore wind projects could provide a third of our energy needs and provide up to 3,500 megawatts worth of energy in the immediate future. A new administration should pledge to reach 3,000 megawatts of off-shore wind by 2025 and commit to reaching 5,000 megawatts by 2030. As we continue to rebuild our coast in the wake of multiple storm events, we need to invest in clean, renewable energy sources that do not contribute to climate change.

Combating Lead in Our Schools and Homes

Removing hazardous lead in our schools and homes is incredibly important and should be prioritized by the state. New Jersey must identify a multi-billion dollar long-term source of funding for lead remediation that doesn't include raiding the Clean Energy, Hazardous Discharge, and Spill Funds. Additionally, the state should require lead testing and disclosure at the tap when any home is sold. This reform should be modeled after the Private Well Testing Act, which says water for homes on private wells has to be tested at the faucet and the well when a home is sold.

Adopting Stricter Drinking Water Standards

Children in some New Jersey cities have more lead in their blood than those in Flint, Michigan. New Jersey's Action Level for lead in the blood is currently 10 ppb. New Jersey is using the Action Level of 15 ppb when it should be stricter: at least 5 ppb like it is in California. Additionally the State must revisit the Christie Administration's rejection of its own scientific experts' recommendations on new drinking water standards for radon, perchlorate, PFOA and related compounds, chromium, and other volatile organic compounds.

Protecting Access to Water

The costs associated with upgrading New Jersey's water systems are huge. We need a minimum of \$8 billion to upgrade our pipes and another \$8 billion to improve resiliency for treatment infrastructure to

protect wastewater plants. The resiliency infrastructure improvements need to be designed in coordination with its local host community and provide a holistic plan that addresses resiliency of the entire area to the effects of climate change, not just the wastewater treatment plant. Resiliency infrastructure needs to combine both grey and green infrastructure that mitigates multiple environmental issues in environmental justice communities. Further, the state should look at alternatives in how it contains and protects water, particularly in its open air reservoirs. In order to achieve all of the above, New Jersey must develop secure, dependable and long term funding streams. The state needs to provide municipalities with assistance in creating Private-Public Partnerships and incentives, especially for new developers, to provide proper storm water management in their developments, especially if they are located in or near a flood zone.

Updating the Water Supply Master Plan and Advancing New Source Water Protections

Update the 20-year-old Water Supply Master Plan, which determines water availability as well as water quality issues. The Christie administration prepared a draft report, but has failed to release it to the public. We are concerned that without issuing the report, the DEP may be allowing development in areas where there is not adequate water supply. The Christie Administration has rolled back Highlands, storm water, coastal, flood hazard, and water quality management planning, as well as other critical related Clean Water Act Rules to curry favor with the builders' lobby and other special interests. These rollbacks must be restored and these rules strengthened to adequately safeguard the water we drink and our economy depends on in the 21st century.

Enacting Funding Mechanisms for Environmental Priorities

The state should seek alternative, innovative and impactful sources of revenue for the priorities above. This can include imposing fees on plastic bags, implementing a deposit on plastic and aluminum cans, as well as fully pursuing natural resource damages (NRD) cases and corresponding legal claims/settlements against major polluters; these options and others warrant a full assessment and consideration under a new administration.

Education

Access to an equitable, quality public education is one of the greatest counters to poverty and inequality. The Christie administration has championed a systemic destabilization of public education from day one. Whether it's advocating for a funding formula that strips needy students of critical resources, or destroying the foundation of healthy locally controlled public schools the intended result has been a system in which the wealthy in our state can ensure their education and prosperity while other communities struggle.

Expanding Preschool Education

Few educational innovations have demonstrated clearer, more concrete benefits than high quality preschool programs. Giving children more educational opportunities in their earliest years pays big dividends in their later educational progress. Unfortunately, too many children begin school without

knowing the letters of the alphabet, how to count, or their colors – skills that are vital to success in school. New Jersey must act on court mandates to offer preschool programs to all three- and four-year olds in the former Abbott school districts. Additionally, New Jersey's must adhere to the current school funding system, which expands preschool offerings to all students who are at risk in districts across the state.

Expanding Full-Day Kindergarten to All Districts

Currently, some students who receive full-day preschool do not have access to full-day kindergarten. Studies show that full-day kindergarten helps close the achievement gap, but every child benefits from full-day kindergarten. Research demonstrates that full-day kindergarten, though initially more costly than half-day kindergarten, is worth the investment. Full-day kindergarten not only boosts students' academic achievement, it strengthens their social and emotional skills as well.

Reducing Class Sizes

Young children in classes of 15 students do significantly better throughout their years in school than those who start out their school career in larger classes. Two major research studies have proven that link conclusively. The first study, Project STAR, was conducted in Tennessee beginning in 1985. That state reduced the size of kindergarten through third-grade classes in half the schools in the poorest areas. Students in small classes outperformed those in larger classes, and continued to do better in middle and high school. African-American students showed the most dramatic improvement. This study was repeated in 1996 when Wisconsin created its SAGE Schools Program and showed the same results. New Jersey has seen positive results in the former Abbott school districts where small classes have been implemented. This proven reform has shown great value in early grades and should be implemented statewide.

Developing Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are teams of educators who work together to address student needs and the school environment. The development of collaborative school cultures, driven by instructional leadership from teachers and administrators, has been proven to yield high quality outcomes for student learning. New Jersey must develop effective PLCs in schools across the state.

Ensuring Standardized Testing is Fair and Equitable

The debates around the use of high-stakes testing in general and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test used here in New Jersey continue. New Jersey remains one of only 7 states who continue to use PARCC. The State Board of Education has approved graduation requirements that will make passing PARCC a graduation requirement. A recent analysis of PARCC test scores revealed a strong correlation between the socio-economic status of students and their PARCC test scores. Standardized tests should be valid, equitable to all students, and should be just one indicator among many, that quantifies a student's achievement.

Creating a Predictable Path to Local Control of Districts

For over 25 years, the state Department of Education (DOE) has run the school districts of Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson, and recently took over Camden as well. Although the state has been returning some control to the districts, the state still retains some degree of control in all those districts. State takeover districts must be put on a predictable path to local control with a reasonable timeframe.

Fully Funding and Adhering to the School Funding Reform Act

The NJ Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA). The state, however, has failed to follow the law, provide the level of funding required by the formula, or to even use the formula to calculate school aid annually. A recent State Auditor report found that 365 districts would've received more school aid in FY 2016 if the SFRA was used to allocate aid to districts. The SFRA formula must be followed, funded, used to calculate and allocate school aid. In the absence of sufficient funds to fully-fund SFRA, aid must be prorated.