



THE AFFORDABILITY AGENDA

Lowering costs and building opportunity for New Jersey Families

No one needs to tell you that costs for everything from health care to housing to groceries are too high. And for all the promises from career politicians to do something about it — nothing seems to change. But I was trained to focus on the mission at hand, and I've never backed down from a challenge.

I'll start by going after the bad actors and special interests who drive prices up and sell our residents out. I'll stand up to health care middlemen who make your prescriptions unaffordable, the monopolies that hike up mortgage and rental prices, and the grid operators who continue to raise energy costs without accountability. I'll put innovation and common sense to work to drive real solutions to bring down housing, health care, and utility bills.

And there's no cost higher than the price that all of us will have to pay if we don't stand up to the chaos coming out of Donald Trump and Elon Musk's Washington. As Trump and Musk work to dismantle Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and defund programs that support our students and our seniors, I'll fight like hell to stop their reckless assault that raises costs for all of us and use every power available to me as governor to protect New Jerseyans.

We know the difference between saying and doing — and New Jersey's families deserve better than empty promises and superficial solutions. I was named New Jersey's most effective House lawmaker because I deliver results. Making New Jersey more affordable is one of our most important tasks, and as your governor, lowering costs and building opportunity is my top priority for you and your family.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mikie Sherrill', with a stylized flourish at the end.



We can't make New Jersey more affordable without making housing more affordable. Our state has seen the second-largest decline in housing inventory since 2019 and the average home price is over half a million dollars. As Trump expands his tariffs on key building materials like lumber and steel, this home affordability crisis will only get worse. We must build more homes for working families, which will allow New Jerseyans to hold on to more of their paychecks and unlock economic growth. As the country's most densely populated state, we need smart, environmentally conscious development so that our residents, from young people to seniors, can keep living in the Garden State.

HOUSING

- ✓ Increase access to loans and tax credits to incentivize the strategic development and redevelopment of new housing. We should work collaboratively with local governments on the conversion of underused office parks, strip malls, and industrial properties into homes, transit-oriented development, and mixed-use projects, which increases housing inventory while minimizing sprawl.
- ✓ Provide technical and planning assistance and incentives to municipalities to encourage innovative zoning and redevelopment strategies to build a range of housing options, including workforce housing and “Missing Middle” units such as starter homes and ADUs, to increase the overall housing supply for all families while meeting the specific needs of each community.
- ✓ Streamline and strongly coordinate the state permitting and approval process for new housing construction to increase predictability and reduce delays that greatly increase the cost of new homes. Each additional month of delays significantly increases building costs, and large-scale delays reduce the number of homes that can be built.
- ✓ Strengthen first-time homebuyer assistance programs to expand access to homeownership for young families and people looking to make New Jersey their home.
- ✓ Crack down on predatory investors, negligent landlords, and deceptive lenders who buy up rental properties and jack up prices, collude to rig rents above market levels, don't take care of their buildings, and discriminate in the home mortgage and rental markets.
- ✓ Oppose any budget diversions from the New Jersey Affordable Housing Trust Fund, to ensure that the state is supporting municipalities developing new housing.

ENERGY COSTS

Families across New Jersey are struggling with rising utility bills, and it's expected to get even worse this summer as our existing energy infrastructure fails to keep up with our power needs. This is a classic supply and demand problem — and New Jersey can turn the tables to take control of our energy future. As Trump rolls back federal investments to reduce energy costs, I'll take bold action at the state level to invest in clean energy like solar, which is one of the cheapest energy sources to develop. By prioritizing the right investments in new clean power resources, we can reduce our carbon footprint, increase energy independence, and help families across the state save money.

- ✓ Prioritize and support low-cost, in-state clean energy investments and innovations to bring down rates for families by increasing power generation and expanding capacity.
- ✓ Streamline approvals across state agencies to quickly bring clean energy projects online to reduce electricity costs, combat climate change, and safeguard New Jersey's environment.
- ✓ Increase the use of state properties to host solar projects — such as on closed landfills, NJ TRANSIT facilities, rooftops, and carparks — which will generate new clean power and put our state in greater control of our energy future.
- ✓ Assist New Jerseyans in adopting clean energy solutions, like community solar, to help make clean energy technology more accessible and improve reliability.
- ✓ Fight anti-consumer actions taken by Trump's regulators at the federal level, which are driving increasing power costs in the region.
- ✓ Pressure regional grid operators, controlled by big oil and gas CEOs, to plug in clean energy projects to the grid — which makes up 95% of the potential power waiting to get connected — to save ratepayers money.
- ✓ Collaborate with neighboring states to upgrade energy infrastructure — including expanding battery storage — to bring down costs and increase energy capacity.





Health care in New Jersey isn't working for anyone. Trump and Washington Republicans are threatening to make things worse, moving to slash Medicare, Medicaid, and children's health insurance. We need to focus on lowering costs and ensuring access to high-quality coverage. Keeping health care costs under control will ensure everyone in New Jersey can access the care they need without falling into medical debt. Expanding access to preventative care will not only improve overall public health but also lower long-term costs by reducing more serious health issues down the road. Improving healthcare pricing transparency can make costs more predictable and manageable for patients in our state.

HEALTH CARE

- ✓ Drive down prescription drug costs for families by cracking down on Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) – the middlemen who inflate prescription drug prices. Require PBMs to pass discounts on prescriptions directly to patients instead of allowing them to keep the money to boost their profits, and remove incentives that PBMs abuse in order to pick the most expensive drugs for coverage.
- ✓ Require greater transparency in health care prices, which will drive prices down through increased competition, and help patients find affordable care.
- ✓ Require health insurance companies to publicly disclose and justify premium increases to hold them accountable for escalating rate hikes and coverage denials.
- ✓ Increase access to preventative/primary healthcare services, especially through innovative delivery models like mobile clinics and partnerships between health systems and schools, to ensure New Jerseyans can address health care needs early, before they become more severe, and in the most cost-effective setting.
- ✓ Direct the Attorney General to investigate price gouging, monopolies, and high rates of denying coverage among insurers that are driving up health care premiums and leaving New Jerseyans without access to affordable care.
- ✓ Prioritize the work of Nurture NJ and the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority to tackle the challenges we face in maternal health, particularly for Black women, who are seven times more likely to die from maternal complications.

TAX RELIEF

Average property taxes in New Jersey just hit \$10,000 —the highest in the country. And now, Trump is planning to extend the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap, punishing New Jersey families to fund tax cuts for his billionaire friends like Elon Musk. Our tax system, particularly our high property tax rates, all too often makes our state unaffordable for families. High taxes have contributed to both families and businesses leaving NJ for neighboring states with lower tax burdens. Providing tax relief to families will make life more affordable and our economy more competitive.

- ✓ Unlock the potential of shared services for municipalities and school districts to lower municipal costs and property taxes through stronger innovation and research at the state level, and offer incentives for local governments' upfront costs, to make ideas like shared building and construction departments, animal control, and joint municipal courts a reality, improving efficiency and saving taxpayers money.
- ✓ Take on one of the largest drivers of increased property taxes — rising health care costs that counties and municipalities must pay — through independent, third-party auditing of the State Health Benefits Program claims and clawing back overpayments.
- ✓ Lower income taxes for New Jerseyans by expanding the state-level Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.
- ✓ Implement a caregiver assistance tax credit to help offset the high costs of caring for senior family members.
- ✓ Redesign and reintroduce the back-to-school sales tax holiday to help parents with the cost of school supplies.
- ✓ Close tax loopholes and crack down on ultra-wealthy and corporate tax cheats who get away without paying their fair share — and pass those savings on to working families.

KIDS

Making life easier for families starts with our kids. I'm a mom of four, so I know parents have to juggle a lot. From daycare expenses to after-school programs, school supplies to medical bills, families are facing costs that just keep going up. And that's as our kids need more support than ever — as mental health concerns and isolation rise, in part due to the toxic effects of social media. On top of that, Trump and Washington Republicans are now working to slash education, nutrition, and health care programs that New Jersey families rely on. When we prioritize and support our children, we are investing in the future success of our state.

- ✓ Expand on-the-job training for qualified child care professionals to increase the number of childcare slots so parents can go back to work or take on expanded hours.
- ✓ Work with our districts and our local child care providers to create partnerships to expand universal pre-K, because we know that pre-K sets up children for a lifetime of success, greater wages, and helps parents stay in the workforce.
- ✓ Work with New Jersey employers to establish support programs that enable them to offer the child care options their employees need.
- ✓ Provide school meals at no cost to parents, giving all students the nutritional food they need to learn and thrive while freeing up room in everyone's family budget.
- ✓ Offer expanded mental health care services and high-impact tutoring programs in our schools that address the individual needs of every student without parents footing the bill.
- ✓ Support all districts implementing "community school" programs, like before and after school activities, health and nutrition services, and parent learning, that meet the needs of families and increase learning opportunities for students through local partnerships, not high taxes.



FOOD PRICES

The high cost of groceries is a top concern that I hear about as the increase in food prices has not spared New Jersey. Week after week, New Jerseyans are paying too much for our most basic needs. Trump's reckless tariff war and planned cuts to nutrition programs are making it impossible for families to budget. These rising costs are placing a serious burden on families, especially those who are already struggling to make ends meet. In New Jersey, we should promote competition within the grocery market, increase local food production, and support our state's farmers and agricultural sector.

- ✓ Go after large corporations who jack up food prices and take advantage of consumers during a crisis.
- ✓ Incentivize new investments by small food retailers, which will add more local options, create stronger competition, lower prices, and address food deserts.
- ✓ Support farmers and farmland preservation to strengthen our agricultural industry, a vital part of our communities, that produces the nation's best corn, tomatoes, and blueberries.
- ✓ Protect incentives for locally grown food in the face of ongoing attacks from Trump's Washington, like cuts to programs that help schools and food banks purchase from local farmers.



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