

**\*PRESS RELEASE\***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 26, 2025

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**THIRD DISTRICT LEGISLATORS CALL FOR FISCAL DISCIPLINE, NO NEW TAXES, AND SPENDING FREEZE IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSAL**

*"Families across New Jersey are making tough decisions to keep their finances in check—government needs to do the same."*

GLASSBORO, NJ – Senator John Burzichelli, Assemblywoman Heather Simmons, and Assemblyman Dave Bailey Jr. of New Jersey's Third Legislative District are calling out Governor Phil Murphy's proposed \$58.1 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which increases state spending by \$1.5 billion over last year's \$56.6 billion approved by the General Assembly. The lawmakers argue that, despite the governor's own calls for fiscal discipline, his budget undermines that message by prioritizing new taxes over responsible cost controls.

"In regard to this proposed budget, and as a general principle, we strongly oppose raising any taxes," said Sen. Burzichelli. "New Jersey is already overtaxed. The state budget should reflect strict fiscal responsibility without relying on tax increases, and we will stand firmly on that belief throughout this process."

Gov. Murphy's sales tax expansion would hit everyday purchases—cigarettes, alcohol, vehicle trade-ins, even boats. He would also raise taxes on online gaming, sports betting and real estate transfers. These new taxes would directly impact the middle class, according to the Third District legislators, and they're tone-deaf to the needs of New Jersey families.

In anticipation of this lack of restraint, the Third District delegation has already put forward the **Freeze Spending Act (A5331-Simmons)**. This legislation would cap state appropriations for Fiscal Year 2026 at current levels, ensuring New Jersey doesn't dig itself into a deeper fiscal hole. Additionally, any revenue collected beyond this cap would be allocated to the New Jersey Debt Defeasance and Prevention Fund to reduce state debt and avoid unnecessary borrowing.

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“If we could freeze spending in Gloucester County for three years—without cutting services or doing layoffs—why can’t the state do the same?” asked Asw. Heather Simmons, who previously served as Gloucester County Commissioner Deputy Director and froze county spending for three years. “Families across New Jersey are making tough decisions to keep their finances in check—government needs to do the same.”

With the governor’s budget now in the hands of the Legislature, the Third District lawmakers are pushing for meaningful changes to protect taxpayers and ensure responsible governance.

“New Jersey families deserve better than unchecked tax hikes and unnecessary spending. Our constituents deserve a responsible, balanced budget, especially with the current uncertainty at the federal level.” said Asm. Dave Bailey, Jr. “We need to be expanding our surplus to safeguard New Jersey residents from potentially reckless cuts to Medicaid and other crucial programs that they rely on.”

### **PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE RELIEF**

Beyond the **Freeze Spending Act**, Burzichelli, Simmons, and Bailey have been moving multiple bills to provide immediate financial relief to New Jersey residents:

- **Electricity Bill Cap Act (A5255-Simmons)**: Limits annual electricity rate increases to inflation for families earning up to \$120,000, protecting residents from excessive rate hikes.
- **Energy Bill Watch (A4817-Bailey)**: Requires utility companies to notify customers in advance of excessive usage, allowing families to better manage their budgets.
- **Car Insurance Reduction Act (A5254-Simmons)**: Increases competition among insurers, ensures transparency in premium calculations, and expands policy options to lower costs for drivers.

### **SUPPORT FOR ANCHOR AND STAY NJ**

The Third District delegation supports the Governor’s commitment to fully fund the **ANCHOR** and **Stay NJ** property tax relief programs, which have provided essential relief to homeowners, renters, and seniors. However, they are also taking action to ensure these programs work more efficiently.

To address the barriers that have made accessing property tax relief difficult, the delegation has introduced **A5277-Simmons**, which would streamline the application process, enhance transparency, and remove bureaucratic red tape.

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“The money is there. It belongs to the taxpayer,” said Asw. Simmons, prime sponsor of the bill.  
“At a time of fiscal uncertainty, this bill is about fairness and common sense. New Jerseyans deserve a system that works for them—not against them.”

For more information, contact the legislators at [www.ld3nj.com](http://www.ld3nj.com), or (856) 226-3530.

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