

# NJ THIRD DISTRICT

## Newsletter

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DEPUTY SPEAKER  
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ASSEMBLYWOMAN

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### State Website Tip:

The new Non-Profit Information Center is now available under State Websites on our site at: [www.njlegdistrict3.com](http://www.njlegdistrict3.com)

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## Direct Wine Shipping Law Boosts State's Wine Industry



Legislation sponsored by Senate President Sweeney, Assembly Deputy Speaker Burzichelli and Assemblywoman Riley that would stimulate the growth of New Jersey's winery business, was signed into law on January 17.

The new law allows direct shipping of wine to New Jersey residents from small wineries only, which is defined as those wineries that produce 250,000 gallons or less of wine per year. This law levels the playing field for small businesses by allowing small wineries both in-state and out-of-state to operate outlets in New Jersey.

"The limited access people have to New Jersey wines has suffocated an industry that has enormous potential for growth," said Senator Sweeney. "New Jersey's wine industry can grow by leaps and bounds if we act to change our current flawed policies. This in turn will spur the kind of economic growth we sorely need in the state right now."

New Jersey has gone from just a handful of wineries a dozen years ago to more than 50 to-

day, ranking our state seventh in the nation for total wine production. Many of the state's wineries are located in rural areas and do not produce enough wine per year to have relationships with wholesalers. This makes their retail outlets and tasting rooms, as well as a few wine festivals held throughout the year, the only way for wine consumers to purchase their products. New Jersey's ban on direct shipping has caused the state's wine industry to be uncompetitive with other wineries and suffer a significant loss of potential business.

"This law balances the modern needs of our wine industry with the need of liquor stores and distributors and positions both for even more economic, job-creating success," said Assemblyman Burzichelli. "It is pro-consumer and pro-business, and it ensures our blossoming wine industry will be competitive and modern. It's a common sense approach."

"Consumers can purchase just about anything these days through shipping," said Assemblywoman Riley. "Wine shipping, as long as it's carefully regulated, should be no different. The previous laws were holding New Jersey's wine industry back and ensuring they remain less competitive with wineries in other states, and that had to change."

## Job Creation Remains High Priority for 2012 Session

Committed to getting the state's economy moving again, the Third District Legislators are supporting several pieces of legislation that will spur job creation and help small businesses grow in New Jersey.

"We have seen some positive economic news recently, but it is nowhere near enough in terms of what needs to be done," said Senate President Sweeney. "Hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans still can't find work and our small businesses are struggling to hire and expand. The bills we

have passed in the Senate, coupled with the various ones we passed earlier in the year, will go a long way towards getting our economy moving again. I hope Governor Christie will join us in this effort."

"The economy is recovering too slowly to keep pace with the demand for jobs," said Deputy Speaker Burzichelli. "We need to do everything within our power to help spur job growth and create economic opportunities for our residents." *Article continues on Page 4.*

## New Assembly Chairmanships Highlight Legislators' Strengths



Assembly members John Burzichelli and Celeste Riley will each be stepping into new chairmanships in the new Legislative Session.

Deputy Speaker Burzichelli was named chairman of the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will lead in the careful review of the fiscal impact prospective legislation would have on the state. The committee also considers measures that pertain to revenues, taxation, and the state

budget.

In addition, he will continue on the Assembly Regulatory Oversight and Gaming Committee as the vice-chair, having left his chairman post to head the Appropriations Committee. He is also a member of the Assembly Budget Committee and remains a member of the Red Tape Review Commission.

Assemblywoman Riley has been appointed chairwoman of the Higher Education Committee. The committee handles issues that relate directly to the state's 31 public colleges and universities, including its 19 county and community colleges.

"New Jersey is fortunate to have a wide-ranging and varying higher education system, but worries about increasing costs and concerns about the

future of our colleges have never been higher," said Assemblywoman Riley. "We have to make sure we provide viable tuition aid to our families and put the right plans in place for our college facilities and major projects such as the medical school at Rowan University. Our colleges not only build strong futures for our children, but they are vital economic engines for our state, and we must position them to succeed. The emerging global economy demands nothing less."

The Assemblywoman has also joined the Tourism and Arts Committee as its vice-chair and will serve as a member of the Assembly Transportation, Public Works, and Independent Authorities Committee.

## Bill to Increase School Funding to High Growth Districts is Vetoed

Despite being passed by both the Senate and Assembly, legislation sponsored by Senate President Sweeney, Assemblyman Burzichelli, and Assemblywoman Riley to provide additional aid to school districts that are experiencing rapid enrollment growth was vetoed by the governor. The bill would have appropriated \$4.141 million from the Property Tax Relief Fund to the Department of Education, to be distributed to districts that have experienced extraordinary growth in recent years.

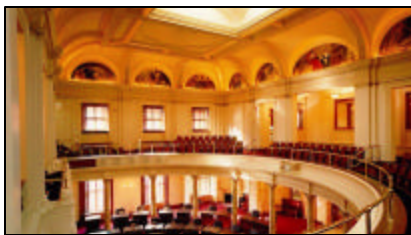
"It's a matter of common sense that when a school has more kids, it is going to have more costs," said Senator Sweeney. "Due to the inadequacy of the school funding formula in the current budget, there are school districts that

simply can't handle the added costs of these students. In the end, it is the students who will suffer if we fail to meet those additional costs."

In order to receive the aid, a school district's projected resident enrollment for October 2011 would have had to exceed the actual October 2008 resident enrollment by at least 13 percent. School districts within the Third Legislative District that would have been impacted by this bill include East Greenwich, Kingsway Regional, South Harrison, Swedesboro-Woolwich, and Elmer.

Because the 2010-2011 session of the Legislature had already expired, the veto cannot be overridden.

## Assemblyman Burzichelli Advocates for Revamp of NJTV Coverage



View of the Senate Chamber in the State House, Trenton.

Deputy Speaker John Burzichelli has called for the overhaul of NJTV after the network's lack of coverage of the New Jersey Legislature's Re-Organization.

"NJTV promised to deliver superior

professional broadcasts equivalent to the best in the United States," said Assemblyman Burzichelli. "NJTV continues to break their promise to our state's viewing audience."

Previously the station failed to provide coverage of important events, such as Hurricane Irene and the announcement of the Governor's presidential plans. NJTV aired cartoons for a portion of the legislature's reorganization and tribute to the passing of Assembly Minority Leader Alex DeCroce.

John Burzichelli was one of the lead sponsors and champions of legislation that attempted to save NJN and prevent the Governor from selling the state's

public broadcasting rights to New York-based WNET.

"Since the station has repeatedly failed to provide coverage important to New Jersey, the Governor's office should begin exploring the termination of the current contract," said the Assemblyman. "Unfortunately, Montclair University lost the bid to run the operation of the now defunct NJN to WNET. Perhaps, if Montclair had control of NJTV, and was not merely leasing space to the new station, our residents would have the opportunity to witness coverage of significant events in New Jersey."

## Bridgeton Vandalism Motivates Bill to Protect Historic Monuments



Photo depicting the vandalism of the Bridgeton Civil War monument provided by Cathy Cramer of *The News of Cumberland County*.

In early December, a monument dedicated to those soldiers and sailors killed in the Civil War was discovered headless in the Bridgeton City Park. In addition, markings were found on the pedestal which is believed to be the work of vandalism. The cost of restoration is estimated between \$10,000-\$75,000.

The statue, erected in 1915 by local veterans, honors the Civil War soldiers from the City of Bridgeton who sacrificed their lives. Of 100 men in the 12th N.J. Company K, only 35 returned from war.

As the new vice-chair of the Tourism and Arts Committee, Assemblywoman Riley recently introduced legislation to increase penalties for any acts of vandalism to historic buildings and monuments.

“The purpose of this legislation is to deter acts of vandalism by making the consequences more severe,” said Assemblywoman Riley. “The very least we can do to appreciate our history and those that protected the freedoms we enjoy is to ensure that their memory is honored.”

The bill (A2060) was introduced by the Assemblywoman on January 17 and is currently under review by the Assembly Law and Public Safety committee. This legislation would amend the current law to include any damages upon a historic building, monument, or structure as a crime of the third degree. It would help in the effort to discourage further acts of vandalism such as the one that occurred in Bridgeton.

The City of Bridgeton is accepting donations for the restoration of the American Civil War statue. Donations can be sent to the Civil War Restoration Project, c/o Colonial Bank FSB, 85 Broad Street, Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302.

On February 11th a concert is planned at the Marino Center in Bridgeton to raise funds for the restoration project. For more information, please call the City Hall Annex at 856-455-3230 ext. 200 to purchase \$10 tickets. The concert will include performances by The Libby Prison Minstrels, the 12th Regiment Band, The Philadelphia Brigade, and Davis Kincaid “The Irish Volunteer.”

## Gasoline Rebates are Now Law



In the wake of spiking gas prices, legislation sponsored by Assemblywoman Celeste Riley and Assemblyman John Burzichelli, aimed at providing some relief at the pump, was signed into law. It allows retailers to offer rebates for the purchasing of gasoline. Many states participate in similar gasoline rebate programs, including our neighboring state, Pennsylvania.

The new law will push New Jersey’s gasoline retail market into the 21st century and allow gas stations to compete for business. Retailers like CVS and Rite Aid regularly offer competing promotions to the benefit of consumers.

“If every other retailer is allowed to offer promotions to attract customers with better deals then gas retailers should be given that same opportunity, especially when

gas prices are so high,” said Assemblywoman Riley. “Gas is a necessity for most Americans and this legislation is a win-win for consumers and the industry.”

The law stipulates that a consumer who earns credits through purchases on a credit card, debit card or rewards card may use those credits to receive a rebate or discount when purchasing gas. “The outdated law made little sense for consumers, especially in this era of increased competition and volatile gas prices,” said Assemblyman Burzichelli. “The purpose of a free market is for competition and the rebates can only benefit motorists who need these savings.”

The bill passed the state legislature and was signed by the Governor on January 5.

## Member Legislation Updates

- **Sports Wagering Bill is Signed into Law**

A4385/S3113 (Burzichelli) ~ This legislation would allow casinos in Atlantic City and racetracks to conduct wagering on professional and collegiate sports or athletic events if the federal ban is overturned. In November voters overwhelmingly approved amending the State Constitution to allow sports gaming in the state. It was signed into law on Jan.17.

- **Misuse of “Jersey Fresh” Logo Becomes Law**

A2665/S3184 (Riley) ~ Legislation that would double the penalties for the misuse of the “Jersey Fresh” logo on products was signed into law on January 17.

- **Health Insurance Policy Transparency**

A935 (Riley) ~ Assemblywoman Riley continues to push for more transparency in our health care system by reintroducing legislation that would help consumers determine which services are covered under their health insurance policies.

- **Law Allows Service Animals for Students**

A1718/S1797 (Burzichelli) ~ Allows a student with a disability, including autism, to have access to a service animal on school grounds. The measure passed both houses unanimously and was signed by the Governor.

## Fraud Protections Against Foreclosure Rescue Scams Become Law



Legislation sponsored by Assemblymen Gary S. Schaer and John J. Burzichelli to protect New Jersey homeowners from foreclosure

rescue scams was signed into law by the Governor.

The Foreclosure Rescue Fraud Prevention Act was previously passed by the Legislature and then conditionally vetoed by Governor Christie. As amended to address the veto, the new law will require that foreclosure consultants and distressed property purchasers, who contract with owners of residential

properties in financial distress, abide by guidelines in providing foreclosure prevention services to property owners.

The re-crafted legislation is intended to curb foreclosure rescue scams without adversely impacting the residential real estate market.

"Many homeowners who were under water financially looked to others for help," said Assemblyman John Burzichelli. "They were swindled out of their savings without receiving foreclosure mediation assistance."

The law requires foreclosure consultants post a bond with the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance before carrying out any business in the state. The law also prohibits foreclosure consultants from collecting fees prior to the completion of all agreed upon services and until the distressed property

relief is secured. The bill also stipulates that collecting fees in excess of what the statute specifies is also prohibited.

Violations of this statute carry a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for the first offense, and not more than \$20,000 for the second and future offenses.

The legislation was supported by the New Jersey Bankers Association, the New Jersey Realtors Association, the New Jersey Land Title Association, New Jersey Citizen Action, and Legal Services of New Jersey.

"The spirit of this law is to help those on the brink of homelessness," stated the Assemblyman. "We hope this new law will keep the American dream of homeownership alive and protected for New Jersey residents."

## Bipartisan Job and Economic Growth Bills Pass the State Senate

*Continued from Page 1.*

"Our first priority is to approve bi-partisan solutions that will help put people back to work," said Assemblywoman Riley. "These bills will help those who are struggling to find a job and a means to self-sufficiency for themselves and their families."

The following bills, largely with bipartisan support, cleared the Senate on December 15:

**S3033** would establish the Grow New Jersey Assistance Program to provide tax credits to certain businesses;

**S3064** would authorize the Director of the Division of Investment to establish a program to invest a portion of the state pension funds into New Jersey businesses in the form of venture capital;

**S3066** would permit small women owned or minority owned businesses located in designated regional centers to qualify for loans from the Economic Development Authority

as if located in the designated urban center;

**S3072** would direct the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and Commission on Higher Education to promote the establishment of higher education and business partnerships;

**S3080** would establish the "Back to Work NJ Program;"

**S3089** would establish the New Jersey Food Access Initiative; funds initiative with certain sales tax revenue from urban enterprise zones for five years.

One bill (S3033) was signed into law by the governor, while two others (S3064 and S3066) expired at the end of the legislative session without being sent to the governor.

The governor vetoed the three remaining measures, meaning they will not become law. In the coming weeks, the Legislature will be examining further measures that can assist in getting New Jersey's economy moving again.

## Constituent Resource Corner: Tracking the Progress of Legislation



The New Jersey State Legislature website is an important resource for residents interested in learning more about State House proceedings. Constituents can learn more about State representatives, the Legislature's schedule, and search for the status of specific bills by visiting the legislative site at [www.njleg.state.nj.us/](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/).

Those interested in reviewing which bills the State Senate and Assembly are scheduled to vote on may look at the Legislative Schedule located at the center

of the webpage. Residents may also subscribe for free email notifications of legislative activity for selected bills by clicking on the subscribe button.

The yellow bill search box at the right side allows one to search a bill by typing the Assembly or Senate bill number in the format of A758 or S2663 (there should be no spaces within the bill number) or by using keywords. In addition, the public can review a list of sponsored legislation per state representative by clicking the legislator's name.

The Third Legislative District website

of Sweeney, Burzichelli, and Riley at [www.njlegdistrict3.com](http://www.njlegdistrict3.com) includes a list of their legislative initiatives, along with information on how to best contact them for help on constituent matters, as well as a host of state resources.

"Our website has become a key component in providing constituent services and resources," said Assemblyman Burzichelli. "We hope to boost our constituents' knowledge of state programs and to assist them in communicating with an agency should difficulty arise."