

NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

1711 Route 34 South • Wall Township, New Jersey 07727-3934

Telephone: (732) 798-8137 • (800) 852-0137

Fax: (732) 938-2580

Robert F. Ordway, President
Joseph T. Hankins, Vice President
Edward R. Mullen, CPA, Treasurer
Frank P. Cavallo, Esq., Counsel

Brian E. Martone, Secretary
Richard K. Dreby, 1st Asst. Secretary
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Legislative Committee Report **May 7, 2026**

The legislative sessions for the 2026/2027 are currently dealing with the purposed Governors budget. The Officers continue to speak with Senators and Assembly persons in reference to the bills we are most interested in, particularly, the Cancer Screening Bill and the Post Traumatic treatment bill. Our advocate Matt McDermott is doing a great job in setting up the zoom meetings with the Senators and Assembly persons and making very important contacts and allowing the Officers of the Association speak directly to those individuals. We have had no negative comments from anyone we have spoken to.

Attached to this report is the report that we receive from Matt McDermott, Matt is our advocate and I thought it would be good if each of you see the work that he is doing in Trenton on our behalf.

Current Bills that we are tracking are 159 Fire and Emergency Services, 59 Firemen's Home and 50 Pensions for a total of 268.

We continue to talk with as many legislators as possible and if anyone can speak with any legislators in their county, please feel free to do so. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

If you should have any questions in relationship to any activity in the Senate or Assembly, please feel free to contact me.

Respectively submitted,

Richard Dreby

Richard K. Dreby
Chairman Legislative Committee
1st Assistant Secretary

NJ State Firemen's Association
TZG Legislative Report
May 2, 2026

State House Overview

On March 10, 2026, Governor Mikie Sherrill delivered her NJ State Fiscal Year 2027 budget message to the legislature, as constitutionally mandated. She proposed a \$60.7 billion budget, focused on fiscal responsibility, affordability, education, and middle-class property tax relief. The proposal limits spending growth to 1.6% over the previous year, with a \$5.4 billion surplus while not increasing individual taxes, but does affect corporate taxes.

Key highlights from the Governor's proposed FY 2027 Budget include:

- **Property Tax Relief & Affordability:** The budget continues key affordability initiatives, including the ANCHOR program and the Senior Freeze, but scales back the *Stay NJ* program, reducing maximum benefits to \$4,000 and lowering the income cap to \$250,000.
- **Key Investments:**
 - **Education:** A record \$12.4 billion for K-12 and \$1.4 billion for pre-school.
 - **Infrastructure:** Over \$1 billion in state operating support for NJ TRANSIT, funded partially by a corporate transit fee, alongside \$2.1 billion for the State Transportation Capital Program.
 - **Healthcare & Social Services:** Funding for youth mental health initiatives, including a new social media research center, and expanded child care support, and \$7.2 billion for NJ Family Care (the federal and state funded health insurance program for those without access to healthcare)
 - **Government Efficiency:** The plan includes streamlining the state procurement process and enhancing oversight to improve efficiency.
 - **Revenue Generation:** Rather than raising taxes on residents, revenue is increased through corporate tax changes.

The proposal sets the stage for negotiations with the legislature to meet the constitutional deadline of passing a balanced budget into law by June 30.

Legislative Tracking & Media Reports

The legislature began its annual budget break on March 23, its last date of committee activity, and will begin committee meetings again on May 4. During this period, the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees meet to review the Governor's proposed budget and conduct public departmental budget hearings.

TZG continued to work closely the past two months with NJSFA leadership and the Legislative chair to track potentially relevant legislation. The legislature will resume an active schedule of committee and voting session activity from May 4 through the end of June, or once the state budget is passed.

For the latter part of February through April 30, we tracked the activity of 23 bills, alerted the NJSFA for awareness and any potential action. Of the 23 bills, 3 bills were considered in committee, and the other 20 bills were introductions, without any direct committee action. Of specific interest are:

S-1583 - mandates volunteer cancer screenings, was heard and released by the Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee. It was second referenced to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. NJSFA testified in support.

S-1343 - permits students to be eligible for high school graduation credits in health, safety, and physical education for completing county fire academy course under certain circumstances. NJSFA testified in support.

S-3571 - provides certain volunteer and other workers with maximum compensation benefit for workers' compensation claim regardless of outside employment, was heard and released by the Senate Labor Committee, and 2nd referenced to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. NJSFA testified in support.

The one bill introduced of significant interest is:

S-3866 (Gopal, Amato) which mandates access to periodic cancer screening examinations for volunteer firefighters; increases tax on fire insurance premiums. Identical to A-3331 (Stanley). Our objective is with the tax increase on the premium.

Volunteer Cancer Screening Legislation

Current periodic cancer screenings law applies to full-time career firefighters, enrolled or not enrolled in SHBP. In this session, the following are bi-partisan bills introduced extending to volunteer firefighters periodic, no-cost cancer screenings:

A-557 (Auth, Sampson) / **S-1583** (Amato, Bucco) Requires cancer screening examinations for volunteer firefighters starting at least three years after the beginning of volunteer service and every three years thereafter while serving, from SHBP network physicians. Authorizes State payment to participating physicians/providers for screening costs upon proof satisfactory to the Department of the Treasury.

A-3331 (Stanley, Reynolds-Jackson) / **S-3866** (Gopal, Amato) Mandates access to periodic cancer screening examinations for volunteer firefighters; increases tax on fire insurance premiums.

S-2595 (Gopal, Greenstein) requires that volunteer firefighters in New Jersey have access to periodic physician-administered cancer screening examinations, with reimbursement when the screening would not otherwise be covered by the firefighter's health insurance.

Senate State Government, Waging, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee Testimony – S-1583

Drafted testimony in support of S-1583 for the NJSFA to present at the Senate State Government, Waging, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee hearing on March 23, and accompanied Chief Dreby before the committee to publicly testify. The bill was favorably released by the committee.

In advance of the committee hearing, reached out to the individual committee members to promote the bill and ask their support, and to the presidents of the PFA-NJ and FMBA.

Advocated for and submitted support slips for two bills in committee, both of which were favorably released:

Senate Education Committee - **S-1343** (Pennacchio, Bucco) - Permits students to be eligible for high school graduation credits in health, safety, and physical education for completing county fire academy course under certain circumstances.

Senate Labor Committee – **S-3571** (Greenstein, Polistina) - Provides certain volunteer and other workers with maximum compensation benefit for workers' compensation claim regardless of outside employment.

Legislative Member Meetings

We have been conducting member meetings to both advocate for the volunteer cancer screenings legislation as well as request co-sponsor additions. All meetings to date have been positive and members have offered to sign on as co-sponsors. Developed a briefing document on the critical need for volunteer cancer screenings that is shared with legislators and staff for our meetings.

We were able to successfully get S-1583, one of the screenings bills currently pending in the legislature on a committee agenda as the result of our meeting with Senator Beach, who chairs the senate committee in which that bill was assigned.

We are continuing to schedule and conduct meetings with legislators to continue the momentum. We are also working on scheduling a meeting with the Governor's Office.

Additionally, I have spoken directly with the Assembly sponsor, Assemblyman Stanley, and shared our concerns with the language in his bill A-3331 which would increase the current rate of the foreign fire tax premium. I noted we prefer an appropriation in the bill to fund the screening, which is consistent with the program for the career firefighters. He is eager to push the bill but understands our concerns.

Also spoke at length with Dan Harris, the Policy chief for Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin. This is an issue they would support. Dan appreciates the NJSFA objection to making any change to the current foreign fire tax premium rate. With multiple pieces of legislation pending, each seeking to accomplish the same goal but slightly differently, we discussed likely writing one committee substitute that accomplishes the goal but provides consistency in both houses and that ideally protects and advances the NJSFA's objectives as cleanly as possible.