

# **FROM THE DESK OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT**

## **Amato, Rumpf & Myhre Call on State to Hold Utility Assistance Day in the 9th Legislative District**

Highlighting steep increases in utility rates, Senator Carmen Amato, Jr., Assemblyman Brian Rumpf, and Assemblyman Gregory Myhre have called on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) to hold a Utility Assistance Day in the 9th Legislative District.

In February of last year, the NJBPU held a Utility Assistance Day in Toms River after Amato, Rumpf, and Myhre requested the event on behalf of ratepayers struggling to pay their utility bills. All three members of the 9th District Legislative Delegation attended the event to meet with constituents, as well as representatives from utility companies and the NJBPU, to discuss the seriousness of the situation facing ratepayers and the urgent need for relief from Trenton.

In a recent letter to NJBPU President Christine Guhl-Sadovy requesting the scheduling of an assistance day for 2026, the Delegation made the following statements:

“We would like to highlight the success of the Utility Assistance Day held at the Toms River Library in February of last year. The event provided essential support to many residents and demonstrated the positive impact of bringing these resources directly into the community.

“Furthermore, we believe holding Utility Assistance Days in Berkeley Township or Manchester Township would be even more successful. Both communities have large senior populations who are in desperate need of assistance to combat rising utility costs, as they often face greater financial challenges due to fixed incomes and difficulty accessing vital programs. Expanding outreach to these areas would help ensure those most in need receive the assistance they deserve.”

The Delegation has introduced legislation (S-1619 & A-2848) that would require any increases in energy sales tax revenue to be dedicated to utility assistance programs, rather than deposited into the State’s General Fund. During a State budget hearing last year, Senator Amato revealed that the State would realize an \$85 million revenue windfall as a result of a 20 percent increase in electricity bills.

Amato, Rumpf, and Myhre have also introduced legislation (S-1606 & A-1841), titled the “Small Modular Nuclear Incentive Act,” which would expand New Jersey’s energy supply through small modular nuclear reactors as a long-term strategy to help reduce utility costs.

Additionally, the Delegation has introduced legislation (S-3367/A-2855) to divert millions of dollars returned from failed Ørsted offshore wind projects back to ratepayers as direct relief for their electric bills.

Assemblyman Myhre currently serves on an Energy Task Force and has participated in two meetings with lawmakers from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia for regional policy discussions aimed at increasing power generation and making energy more affordable for states within the PJM grid.

Given the continued strain of rising utility costs on families, seniors, and fixed-income residents, the Delegation stressed that the 9th Legislative District remains in urgent need of a Utility Assistance Day and urged the NJBPU to bring this critical resource directly back to the communities it serves.

### **Amato Bill Extending Military Service Credit to School Support Staff Advances**

The Senate Higher Education Committee advanced bipartisan legislation sponsored by Senator Carmen Amato, Jr. (R-Ocean) and Senator Raj Mukherji (D-Hudson) to extend seniority protections to educational support professionals who served in the U.S. Military.

The bill, S-2962, ensures that educational support professionals, such as teacher's aides, administrative assistants, bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, and other non-teaching school district employees, receive the same recognition for their military service that teaching staff members currently receive under state law. Eligible veterans would be granted up to four years of seniority or employment credit for time spent on active duty.

“Educational support professionals are essential to the daily operations of our schools, and many of them have also bravely served our nation,” said Senator Amato. “This collaboration with Senator Mukherji advances our shared goal of ensuring veterans in educational roles receive the recognition and respect they’ve earned.”

### **Amato Bill Providing Tax Incentives to Volunteer First Responders Advances**

The Senate Labor Committee passed bipartisan legislation sponsored by Senator Carmen F. Amato, Jr. (R-Ocean) to provide tax relief to volunteer first responders.

The bill, S-2759, would exempt stipends from the income tax, temporary disability insurance (TDI) tax, and family leave insurance (FLI) tax.

“I want to thank co-prime sponsor Senator Gordon Johnson for working together in a bipartisan manner to support our first responders,” said Senator Amato. “The men and women who volunteer as EMS and firefighters give their time and often risk their safety to protect our

communities. This bill ensures that individuals who step up to serve their community aren't penalized by unnecessary taxes on the stipends they receive."

Senator Amato's bill builds on an ongoing effort to recruit more volunteer first responders across the state.

**Myhre Calls for Fiscal Discipline and Tax Relief As  
Assembly Appropriations Committee Member**

*9th District lawmaker also named to Financial Institutions and Insurance and Children,  
Families and Food Security Committees*

Assemblyman Gregory Myhre, representing the 9th Legislative District, will continue serving on the Assembly Appropriations Committee during the 2026–2027 Legislative Session, positioning him at the center of state budget decisions. He has also been appointed to the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee and the Assembly Children, Families and Food Security Committee.

"New Jersey taxpayers are stretched to their breaking point by the high cost of living and deserve policies grounded in common sense," said Myhre. "My committee assignments provide an important opportunity to push for responsible budgeting, real tax relief, and limited governmental overreach."

During his first term, Myhre established himself as a vocal critic of policies he says are driving up costs for families, businesses, and local school districts. "I won't stop fighting for reforms that lower taxes and utility bills while pushing back against unnecessary government intrusion into people's lives," Myhre said. "Residents want affordability, accountability, and a government that respects their hard-earned money."

Myhre has introduced legislation to transition New Jersey's gross income tax to a flat-tax structure, arguing the current system is overly complex and unfair. "Our tax code is outdated and burdensome," he said. "People want a simpler, more transparent system, not more bureaucratic gimmicks that erode trust in government."

He also called for the repeal of New Jersey's sanctuary state policies, saying state resources should prioritize legal residents. "It's unacceptable that seniors and veterans can struggle to qualify for assistance while taxpayer-funded benefits are extended to those here unlawfully," Myhre said. "I've introduced legislation to repeal the Immigrant Trust Directive so local law enforcement can once again cooperate with federal immigration authorities."

On the Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, Myhre said he will focus on policies that protect consumers and address rising insurance costs. "Decisions affecting banks, lenders, and insurers have real consequences for families and our economy," he said. "We must ensure laws are carefully considered, openly debated, and designed to keep coverage accessible and affordable."

Myhre added that his new role on the Children, Families and Food Security Committee will allow him to advocate for vulnerable residents while maintaining a focus on fiscal responsibility. “I’m proud to serve on committees where I can be a strong voice for the people of the 9th District,” Myhre said. “Taxpayers are tired of higher costs, failed policies, and empty promises. I’m committed to fighting for practical solutions that make New Jersey more affordable for everyone.”

## **Amato Bill to Expand Beach Access for Families and Veterans Passes Committee**

Bipartisan legislation by Senator Carmen Amato, Jr. (R-Ocean) to expand beach access for New Jersey families and veterans passed the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee today.

“New Jersey’s beaches are a treasured part of our state, and they should be accessible to everyone, especially our veterans and our youth,” said Senator Amato. “This legislation is a commonsense update that helps ease the financial burden on families and veterans and opens the door for more New Jersey families to enjoy our beautiful Jersey Shore.”

The bill, S-1533, would expand existing law to authorize municipalities to offer free or reduced-cost beach access to two additional groups: all honorably discharged veterans, regardless of length of service or disability status, and children aged 12 to 17.

Under current law, towns may waive or reduce beach fees for seniors, individuals with disabilities, active-duty military members and their families, and veterans who served at least 90 days of active duty or were discharged due to service-related injuries.

## **Rumpf Named to Budget, Health and Veterans’ Affairs Committees**

9th District Assemblyman Brian Rumpf has received Assembly committee assignments for the 2026–2027 Legislative Session.

Assemblyman Rumpf will continue to serve on the Assembly Budget Committee, but now in the capacity of the Republican budget officer in the Caucus Leadership. Additionally, the Assemblyman will be returning to the Assembly Health Committee and the Assembly Military and Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

“Too many State policies are working against taxpayers, who keep losing ground financially to rising property taxes and utility costs that they cannot afford,” said Assemblyman Rumpf. “Seniors living on retirement incomes and middle-class families are being hit the hardest in an affordability crisis that is of Trenton’s own making.

“Tax relief can be achieved by controlling spending and doing away with pet projects in the State budget that cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars each year. This is money that should

be returned to taxpayers who are legal citizens or better yet not taken from them in the first place.

“Reforming the state’s politicized and defective school funding formula is critical to any effort to provide tax relief. Aside from the fact that all students and teachers are entitled to the resources needed for a thorough and efficient education, draconian school aid cuts are tearing communities apart, with tax increases being a chief catalyst.

“School districts on the losing side of the funding formula are forced to lay off teachers, cut busing services, enlarge class sizes, and even sell buildings. At the same time, the prizewinning school districts under the formula rush to spend the windfall of school aid bequeathed by Trenton in what is a blatantly rigged process.

Rumpf added, “Health care policies continue to be a serious concern for many of my constituents, who worry about ill-advised vaccine policies needlessly infringing upon their personal privacy rights. Health care costs can be controlled while still maintaining the quality of medical services residents expect and deserve. Trenton needs to stop politicizing health care policies and end the relentless barrage of mandates that drive up insurance costs.

“Providing a strong voice for veterans and their families is an extremely important responsibility for me to effectively carry out for my constituents,” Rumpf further remarked. “The 9th Legislative District is home to a significant number of veterans as well as to leadership members of celebrated and respected veterans’ organizations. Ensuring the unique needs of veterans are being addressed is an established obligation of the state and, I’m proud to say, is addressed by members of the State Legislature in a bipartisan manner.

In closing, Rumpf remarked, “Overall, I believe my committee assignments place me in an effective position to forcefully represent the interests of my constituents who are done with tax increases, failed energy policies, senseless government mandates, and empty promises of reform.”

In addition to his legislative committees, Assemblyman Rumpf has been named to the Ellis Island Advisory Commission, the Joint Budget Oversight Committee, the New Jersey Commission on Capital Budgeting and Planning and the New Jersey Intergovernmental Relations Commission.

## **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF UPDATE – PAS-1 FILING SEASON IS OPEN**

Senator Carmen Amato Jr. and Assemblymen Brian Rumpf and Gregory Myhre want residents to know that the PAS-1 filing season has officially begun, helping eligible homeowners access important property tax relief programs.

✍ According to the State Treasury:

- Paper PAS-1 applications are being mailed this week
- Seniors age 65 and older, as well as disabled homeowners and mobile homeowners, may use the PAS-1 to apply for:

- ✓ ANCHOR
- ✓ Senior Freeze
- ✓ Stay NJ

🖨️ Online applications are now live at:

🔗 [propertytaxrelief.nj.gov](https://propertytaxrelief.nj.gov)

📅 Deadline to apply: November 2, 2026

#### Stay NJ Payments Update:

Treasury has begun mailing the first round of Stay NJ benefits to eligible seniors and disabled residents who applied last season. Payments are issued as quarterly installments, with the average first payment totaling \$637. The second Stay NJ payment is expected in mid-May.

Eligible applicants received letters in fall 2025 outlining which programs they qualified for. Seniors who qualified for Senior Freeze received those benefits in summer 2025, and ANCHOR payments were issued in fall 2025.

⚠️ We also understand that many residents in our district are still waiting on property tax relief payments. Recognizing the frustration this has caused, our delegation has sent a letter to Governor Sherrill requesting additional resources for the Treasury Department so applications and payments can be processed more quickly.

👉 Taxpayers seeking assistance can take advantage of a number of resources:

- In-Person: Visit a Division of Taxation Regional Information Center for immediate assistance.
- Online Chat: Use the Division's chatbox for general Stay NJ questions (bottom right of any Taxation webpage)
- Check Status / FAQs: Visit [propertytaxrelief.nj.gov](https://propertytaxrelief.nj.gov) for benefit status, program details, and frequently asked questions
- Call: Property Tax Relief Hotline at 1-888-238-1233

Please share this information with neighbors, friends, and family who may be eligible.

As always, our offices remain here to help.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide this legislative update as your 9th District Legislative Delegation and open line of communication with you.

As always, our Delegation is ready to serve you! If you or a family member has an issue regarding State Government, please do not hesitate to contact us via email: [SenAmato@njleg.org](mailto:SenAmato@njleg.org)<mailto:SenAmato@njleg.org> or via phone: 732-678-1355.

