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Senate Democrats' Newsletter

1 message

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Tue, Dec 18, 2018 at 1:39 PM

To: NJSENDEMS <NJSENDEMS@njleg.org>



Sweeney Honored for His Commitment to Vocational-Technical Education



Senate President **Steve Sweeney** was honored for his sponsorship of the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act. Leaders thanked him for his commitment in the securing of 500 million dollars to obtain more space for students to receive vocational and technical education, offering another route to success for New Jersey's youth.

[You Can Watch the Video Here](#)

2 Questions Opponents of Legal Weed Can't Answer

By Tom Moran

(**Senator Nicholas**) **Scutari** has been working on this for a good decade, talking to experts on both sides, travelling all over the country, doing just what you'd want a serious legislator to do.

He's a criminal defense lawyer and has seen up close the damage done by the roughly 32,000 marijuana possession arrests each year in New Jersey, over 600 a week. He's seen white kids with money get away with a slap, while black kids often land in jail.

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Sweeney Says it's Time to 'Fix New Jersey'

By Mike Deak

"We're in a fiscal crisis," (**Senate President Steve**) **Sweeney** told the Somerset County Employer Legislative Committee at a luncheon meeting Friday at Verve Bistro. "We're in trouble. It's scary."

"It's not a Democrat or Republican issue," he continued. "It's a New Jersey issue."

In August, the 25-member Economic and Fiscal Policy Workgroup issued a comprehensive report with 200 recommendations on how to save taxpayer money. That number has been whittled down to 32, Sweeney said.

The recommendations center on reforming the state's pension and health insurance systems. If there are not reforms, the state will have to raise taxes and Sweeney said that he refuses to raise taxes because New Jersey already is the fifth highest taxed state and any more taxes would "scare" away businesses.

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Scutari Speaks in Favor of Legalization of Recreational Marijuana



Senator **Nicholas Scutari** testified before the Senate Budget Committee, where he spoke in support of a bill sponsored by him and Senate President **Steve Sweeney** (S-2703) to legalize the possession and use of recreational marijuana for people age 21 and over.

[You Can Watch the Video Here](#)

Weinberg, McKeon, Kean: NJ Transit Reform Bill Will Make Agency Responsive, Transparent and Accountable



Senate Majority Leader **Loretta Weinberg**, Assemblyman **John McKeon** and Senate Minority Leader **Tom Kean Jr.** lauded final passage of sweeping NJ Transit reform legislation that will add commuters to the NJ Transit Board, mandate public hearings prior to substantial schedule changes or fare hikes, expand legislative oversight, and mandate the disclosure of detailed fiscal, safety and personnel data.

[You Can Read the Story Here](#)

Babies Arrive Safe and Thrive Thanks to Doulas. Now, More People Can Use One

Using a doula can lead to lower rates of caesarian sections, fewer interventions by doctors, fewer complications, and reduced labor times, experts say.

Doulas' charges can range from a couple of hundred dollars to more than \$3,000, according to what part of the country the doula works in.

Sens. **Loretta Weinberg** and **Nia Gill** are sponsoring a bill requiring Medicaid to cover this vital care, with the commissioner of human services establishing regulations such as eligibility rules and coverage limitations.

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Pumping Up State Spending on Open Space, Land Preservation, Parks

By Tom Johnson

The state is preparing to ramp up spending on open space, farmland and historic preservation to as much as \$155 million beginning in fiscal year 2020. Under the bill, sponsored by Sen.

Bob Smith, the Blue Acres program would no longer have a separate fund, but be administered by DEP's Green Acres program. Other than that, the bill largely retains previous years' allocation of funding. Beginning in state fiscal year 2020, 62 percent would go to the acquisition and development of land for conservation and public recreational purposes; 31 percent for farmland preservation; and 7 percent for historic preservation.

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Steve Sweeney @NJSenatePres · 4h
Thanks @CareerTechNJ for the lovely presentation. I was proud to stand with you & all our partners to ensure NJ passed the #SecuringOurChildrensFuture bond act. And a special thank you to the students of @mctsnj for the lovely cake. You all did an outstanding job! @NJ8IA #njsbctc



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Steve Sweeney @NJSenatePres · Dec 9
December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month. When shopping for gifts this month, remember to think about the age of the children involved, what constitutes a choking hazard, and that crayons/markers are labeled non-toxic.

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Loretta Weinberg @SenatorLorettaW · Dec 1
Condolences to the Bush family on the passing of George HW Bush is the age of 94. He was a leader who served his country well; he was a gentleman, kind and courteous; And he was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He will be missed by his family and his country.

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Troy Singleton @Troy4NJ7 · Dec 2
Happy Hanukkah to all of those celebrating. Wishing you and your family a joyful 8 days, Chag Sameach!

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Paul Sarlo @PaulASarlo · Dec 7
A bipartisan group of legislators came to celebrate Christmas with the men and women of the State Building Trades this afternoon



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2 attachments



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