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LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

BASED ON THE THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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M. Teresa Ruiz

New Jersey
Senator, SD-029 (D)

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Lifetime
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Score

NJ Legislative Scorecard 2025

Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution

★ Constitutional	✗ Unconstitutional	? Did not Vote	Vote
1. S2167 Adopting Federal School-meal Standards (Passed 39 to 0 on 6/30/2025).	Requires all public schools (and nonpublic schools in federal meal programs) to follow the USDA's 2012 school-meal standards and any stricter updates, extending them to competitive foods (cafeteria and vending snacks).		YES ✗
2. S3910 Early Childhood Education Expansion (Passed 28 to 10 on 6/30/2025).	Mandates statewide universal preschool and free full-day kindergarten by 2029 while centralizing funding and oversight under state control.		YES ✗
3. A3361 Rent Control (Passed 26 to 12 on 6/30/2025).	Limits rent hikes in manufactured or modular home parks to 2% annually, with narrow exceptions.		YES ✗
4. A5795 Government Investment in Business (Passed 26 to 13 on 6/30/2025).	Expands the New Jersey Innovation Evergreen Act, empowering the Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) to invest more in high-growth startups. Estimated cost per household: -\$14.00/year.		YES ✗
5. S2947 Fake "Election Integrity" Bill (Passed 30 to 8 on 3/24/2025).	Ostensible bans paid ballot harvesting, but makes multiple exceptions that neuters and positive impact.		YES ✗
6. S3562 New Government Office (Passed 24 to 15 on 3/24/2025).	Allows the New Jersey Department of Health to create a nonprofit Public Health Institute to run state health programs, address racial disparities, and manage funding and supplies.		YES ✗

Scorecard Votes: 0%

Why do these votes matter?

1. Adopting Federal School-meal Standards

S2167 requires all public schools (and participating nonpublic schools) to comply with the USDA's school meal nutrition standards, specifically those established in 2012, and any more stringent standards adopted thereafter.

The New Jersey State Senate Passed S2167 on June 30, 2025 by a vote of 39 to 0. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill hands over state sovereignty to the federal government by binding schools to USDA rules now and "any more stringent standards" later. Adopting federal regulations by reference delegates lawmaking to unelected bureaucrats and ensures perpetual federal control. Article I Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution does not authorize Congress to regulate school cafeterias or education in general.

2. Early Childhood Education Expansion

S3910 overhauls preschool funding and access across the state. It updates the formula for providing preschool aid, replacing socio-economic groupings with enrollment-based funding, and requires every elementary-serving school district to offer free full-day kindergarten.

The New Jersey State Senate passed S3910 on June 30, 2025 by a vote of 28 to 10. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill further entrenches government control over education, stripping parents of their rightful authority and forcing taxpayers to underwrite a compulsory, government-run system that has already proven ineffective. Children's education is a God-given responsibility of parents, not the duty of the state.

3. Rent Control

A3361 caps annual rent increases for tenants leasing dwelling sites in manufactured or modular home parks, limiting hikes to 2% per year. Landlords may set a new rate when a different tenant moves in, and they can petition the Department of Community Affairs for a higher increase only if costs such as taxes or maintenance justify it.

The New Jersey State Senate passed A3361 on June 30, 2025 by a vote of 26 to 12. We have assigned pluses to the nays because government-imposed rent control violates property rights protected under the Fifth Amendment. Rent should be determined by the free market. This bill violates Article I, Section 10 of the Constitution, which prohibits states from passing laws interfering with contracts.

4. Government Investment in Business

A5795 empowers the Economic Development Authority to invest more in high-growth startups. It raises the cap on qualified investments—increasing initial funding from \$5 million to \$10 million, and up to \$12.5 million for businesses that are university spin-offs, use state-developed intellectual property, or are minority-/women-owned. Additionally, it allows new tax-credit auctions when available funds exceed \$50 million.

The New Jersey State Senate passed A5795 on June 30, 2025 by a vote of 26 to 13. We have assigned pluses to the nays because such favoritism distorts the free market, shields politically favored businesses from risk, and burdens taxpayers. Granting special treatment to minority- or women-owned businesses undermines the principle that all men are created equal and erodes equal protection under the law. Whether a business succeeds or fails should be determined by the free market.

5. Fake "Election Integrity" Bill

S2947 prohibits both offering and accepting any compensation for individuals serving as mail-in ballot messengers. However, it allows certain facility employees or volunteers—such as those at hospitals, shelters, veteran homes, nursing homes, or nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations—to serve in these roles.

The New Jersey State Senate passed S2947 on March 24, 2025 by a vote of 30 to 8. We have assigned pluses to the nays because nursing homes, special voting deputies, and certain nonprofit organizations were central to ballot-harvesting abuses during the 2020 election. By still allowing these same entities to harvest ballots, the bill leaves the door open for the very same schemes. This legislation gives lawmakers a talking point to claim they acted on election integrity, while in reality deceiving their constituents.

6. New Government Office

S3562 allows the New Jersey Department of Health to designate a nonprofit organization as the Public Health Institute (PHI). This institute will coordinate public-health efforts across state, local, and private sectors; help implement programs tackling racial health disparities; support administrative and fiscal needs; and provide services such as purchasing therapeutics or supplies.

The New Jersey State Senate passed S3562 on March 24, 2025 by a vote of 24 to 15. We have assigned pluses to the nays because the healthcare industry is already heavily (and unconstitutionally) subsidized by the federal government, and creating a state-sanctioned "Public Health Institute" further expands bureaucracy, funnels taxpayer dollars into unelected entities, and centralizes authority in ways more akin to fascist corporatism than free enterprise. Race-based programs reject the principle that all men are created equal.