# Oct 3 - Ciattarelli - NJGovernorsForum

[Music] And welcome back to Pix 11 form with the New Jersey gubanatorial candidates. Before the break, we heard from Democrat Mikey Cheryl. And now it's time to hear from the Republican in the race, Jack Chidarelli. A native New Jersey resident. He is a longtime entrepreneur and small business owner. For nearly seven years, he served in the New Jersey state legislature and made his first run for governor in 2017. This is the second time he is now the Republican nominee. So, please welcome to the stage a Republican nominee for governor of New Jersey, Jack Chidarelli. [Applause] Looking forward to a good competition. Absolutely. We got a great audience who always All right, Mr. Cherelli. So, you ready to go? Well, only if you call me Jack. Okay, I'll call you Jack. Let's get right into it. You know, this week we hosted the Lieutenant Governor debate right here on this very stage. and your running mate James Ganon. I want you to take a listen to what he had to say right here about potential taxes. Is a millionaire's tax on the table in your administration if you win. Taxes are on the table. Taxes are on the table. So what are the taxes on the table that Mr. Ganon's speaking of? He's lieutenant governor. I'm the governor. There will be no tax increases in New Jersey. I have a very specific plan on how to reduce income taxes and property taxes. Those are most burdensome of all. So, why is your running mate opening the door to the conversation about taxes? Did he misspeak? Um, I don't want to speak for Jim. I mean, it was his first first time on the debate stage. Lieutenant Governor, taxes are one of the big things you've been talking about. And he opens the door. Hey, at the last debate, my opponent when asked, she said with regard to taxes, I'm not going to commit myself to anything despite the fact that she's telling the people of New Jersey, I'm raising sales tax to 10%. Which she knows is a blatant lie. Yeah. So, you're saying absolutely no taxes. What about the idea which the original question was about a millionaire's tax and whether or not that would be on the table? My goodness. Our top tax bracket is 10.75. Pennsylvania's is 3%. Do we or do we not want to compete? Our top's business tax rate is now 11 and a half. Pennsylvania's is on its way down to five. We've got to be regionally competitive. We don't want to be chasing people out of New Jersey. We don't want to be chasing businesses out of New Jersey. We need to grow our economy. And I think we need more competitive and regionally competitive tax rates for not only individuals, but also for businesses. So, just to be clear and and put an end to this, taxes are off the table. Increases in taxes are off the table. One of the reasons why we have an affordability crisis in New Jersey is taxes. There's three other reasons, but taxes is one of them. All right. At a recent debate, when asked about efforts to desegregate New Jersey schools, you were questioned whether this would be an issue of discussion if predominantly black schools outperformed white schools. So, let me ask you, does segregation play a role in the disparity of education among New Jersey? I think failing school systems is what plays a role when our students are not performing well. And my job on day one is to fix that. We do that with a new public education curriculum and we'll get that under a different state board of education under Governor Chedarelli. But we also desperately need something that Louisiana and Mississippi have deployed. It's called a high impact curriculum. If a child is behind grade level in reading, writing, and math, we're going to spend the entire next market period and the one thereafter focusing just on those skills. I will tell you as an NBA CP, I'm pretty much a data guy. The data is pretty clear. If a kid comes out of eighth grade below grade level in reading, writing, math, more than likely they'll be undermployed their entire life. So, do you think segregation plays a role at all? Listen, we'd all want more diversified schools. We'd all want more diversified communities. Uh but my job is to fix the public education system. When I talk to people in predominantly Latino or or African-American communities, it's not that they want their kids to go to another school. They want their current schools to succeed. But let me say this, we also need school choice. And that's why I've promoted vouchers and charter schools. This administration's only approved one charter school in its eight years. And the ones that were all approved by Chris Christie in the eight years before in places like Camden and NORC and I visited one of them recently are doing phenomenal. Yeah, but not all families have the option, right, for a charter school, they can't afford to go to a charter school. So what is your plan to help them with the public school? Well, you don't pay to go to a charter school, you pay to go to private school, which points out one of the great hypocrisies of the Democratic party. They'll constantly want to portray themselves as the party of the marginalized and disadvantaged and minorities. Who can afford private school? People with money. People with money have school choice. People without money don't have school choice. Let's give those people a choice. Charters and vouchers provides the choice. So, let me talk about what's happening in real time right now. We're in day three of this government shutdown. And as the as the party in day three, day three of a government shutdown. And as the party in power, how do Republicans make this the least painful shutdown for a New Jersey resident? There's a negotiation taking place in uh in Washington DC. I hope it's resolved soon because we know this does impact people each and every day. Um interestingly enough, when there were government shutdowns during the Biden era, my opponent supported resolutions to continue the operation of the government, but this time around she's voting no on those same resolutions. Let's hope it's resolved sometime soon. What would you urge some of the Republicans to negotiate on? Is there wiggle room in terms of the negotiations? I just hope all the parties get together, which speaks to something else I really want to do as governor. I feel like our 14 member delegation, congressional delegation, 12 House members, two US senators. It's 14 people running in 14 different directions at time. What I plan to do as governor is meet with them once a month, try to galvanize them. And if the 15 of us can say, "These are three things that are critically important to New Jersey. Let's get this done." And uh my hope is that with that kind of leadership, we can get our congressional delegation to work more together. And what's also playing out in real time, President Trump said the administration is withholding roughly $18 billion dollars right now in infrastructure projects, including the Gateway Tunnel project. And for those who don't know, it's that tunnel that connects New York and New Jersey, would provide extra rail service, expected to employ thousands of union jobs. Now, it's expected to be challenged in court, but how would you keep this project funded, and should it be? So, the Gateway project is managed by the Gateway Commission. The Gateway Commission provides the funding and then goes back to the federal government for reimbursement. That project's not going to stop anytime soon. This shutdown would have to go on for at least two or three months before you'd see a slowdown or shut down. The president was saying it's not related to the shutdown that it's related to DEI policies and that's why he's withholding that money. This is part of the government shutdown in my opinion. I know the president says a lot of different things. Uh but we'll get that funding. This shutdown will end. If you had to challenge the president to get some of that money back that he's withholding a lot of these clawbacks, would you sue to get that money to fund this project? I don't need to stew the White House to get things done. I have a relationship with the president unlike my opponent. And um you know, it reminds me of during the pandemic when we were running low on ventilators and the ERs were overfilled. Phil Murphy went to the White House and exchanged all kinds of nicities with the president. He got his ventilators. The president came through. This is a relationship business. I've got a relationship with the White House. We'll get things done for the benefit of New Jersey. And you would say release the money. Absolutely. Listen, my job as governor is to advocate for our 9.3 million citizens. I've probably been one of the most independent Republicans in this entire state. I've called on prominent Republicans across the country resign. I called on Chris Christie resign. Um there are there are times that I've stood up to my party. I'll do what's right by the people of New Jersey. I'm the governor for all the people. Hey, I want to talk about an important topic of transit as we talk about the Gateway Tunnel. And our senior political reporter for Pixel 11, Henry Rostoff has this question. I want you to take a listen right here. New Jersey transit is upping fairs 3% annually for the foreseeable future. If you're elected governor, would you stop the fair increase? And if so, how would you make sure New Jersey Transit has the money to keep commuters moving? So, the first thing I want to do as part of my reorganization of state government, do what other states have done. We're going to create the Garden State Transportation Authority, put all of our mass transit systems under one roof. That's Atlantic City Expressway and its revenue, the Parkway, the Turnpike and its toll revenue, New Jersey Transit and its fair revenue. Now, one management structure, better accountability, better transparency. And for New Jersey Transit, what we're going to do is it's time to re-evaluate every single train and bus line to make sure it has adequate ridership. And we'll cancel ones that don't and dedicate all of our resources to the lines that pro that provide service to the greatest number of computer commuters. Now, I know that goes against the grain of some people, but I'm all about transparency. But it's time to make these kind of tough decisions, and I believe with the subsidy we provide from the state budget, we won't have to raise fairs. So you're saying you would stop those annual fair. I think we could be put ourselves in a position to do that. A lot of questions about Chris Calori whether he's doing a good job. Do you think he's doing a good job? Would you keep him as the president of New Jersey Transit? I think it would be under consideration. I um I have great faith in Chris's talents and I know he's all about improving our mass transit systems. I want to talk about what's really been in the headlines and I just asked your opponent when she was here on the stage about the release of her personal information from the National Archives. She was sitting here accusing you of obtaining and distributing that information. some of those files, those unredacted files. How do you respond to that? So, it is unfortunate that somebody for uh provided or put in to the National Archives a Freedom of Information Act request. The same the equivalent of that here in New Jersey is an Oprah. It's unfortunate that when the National Archives fulfilled that request uh that they didn't redact certain information. They've taken responsibility and they've apologized. Here are the facts. Okay? There was a cheating scandal at the Naval Academy in 1994. My opponent was part of that cheating scandal. It's why she was punished. She was not allowed to walk in the graduation ceremony and her name's not listed in the commencement exercise program. These are the facts. She says it's because she didn't turn in her classmates. I don't think that's the truth. The real truth is in her disciplinary records, which she can release only with her approval. If she do that, we'll find out whether or not she's telling the truth. So those um those military service records that were released by the archives, it did have that unredacted information. Did you or any member of your campaign obtain those records that were unredacted and then distribute them to members of the media or elsewhere like she had just said here? Opposition research takes place all the time. My opponent's done a whole bunch of opposition research on me. Uh there's a team that's responsible for opposition research. It did make its way into the press, so I'm sure at some point did it make its way to the Chidarella campaign. Did anybody in your campaign get those files and then disseminate? Yeah, that I don't know, Dan. There's there's a team that's responsible for opposition research. I don't engage with that team. So, you yourself never saw those files? I never saw those files, nor did I put the requests in. And anybody that states otherwise is lying. If somebody in your campaign did, should they have had an obligation to call and say, "Hey, we have these unredacted files." I think what probably happened is that the National Archives fulfilled the Freedom of Information Act request. And when you get the information came from your campaign, it was that filed the request, it ended up in a pile of documents. And when you get the document from the federal government that you requested, who knows who's looking how closely at that. It's an unfortunate situation. The National Archives has taken responsibility for it and apologize. But you're not saying that it was your campaign that filed that. I don't engage with my opposition research team and I doubt if my opponent engages with hers. Understood. I want to talk about a big issue for New Jersey which I know you're all familiar with and that is property taxes. And you've said you want to cap property taxes to a percentage of a home value as well as freeze property taxes once you hit the age of 70. Just two examples. But as you know, property taxes are largely controlled by schools and towns and not the governor. So how would you get that done? I would respectfully disagree. Um 15 to 20% of any property tax bill is the municipal tax. 15 to 20% is the county tax, which means 60 to 70% is the school tax. And that school tax most times is a function of how much state aid you do or don't get in your district. We've got a very arbitrary, nefarious, and I believe unconstitutional state school funding formula. And so I want a more equitable distribution of state aid to our districts. The more state aid your school district gets, the less it has to tax. So if I send more school aid to your school district, you don't have to tax as much. We just lowered your property tax bill. So you're talking about combining services? No, I'm talking about a more equitable distribution of state aid to our school districts. The more state aid you get, the less the levy. The less the levy, the less the property tax. So let me talk about on schools. Yeah, I understand. And in New Jersey, there are currently 590 school districts, which is is more than the number of municipalities. Now, you said you don't want to force consolidation. You wouldn't mandate it, but you would incentivize it through money. So, what if a school district doesn't take you up on that offer, right? You haven't getting get the buyin that you need. How many school districts would there be at the end of a four-year term? Would the number still be 590? I'm going to incentivize the hell out of it. This really worked when I was a legislator in Princeton Burough and Princeton Township decided to combine become one Princeton. When there is a combination, there's a lot of one-time upfront costs that really shouldn't be bonded for, but if you put them in the first year operating budget, you get a spike in the tax rate, this scares the hell out of everybody. What did I get the administration to do? picked up 100% of the one-time upfront cost as an incentive and a thank you for saving property tax dollars and that's exactly what we did. So, my administration is going to incentivize the hell out of it. But what I've learned the hard way because I've attempted a few of these regionalizations, consolidations, that's a home rule decision. The locals have to decide. Okay? So, it's very well that nobody may do it and it may say the same. My job in lowering property taxes have a more equitable distribution of state aid to schools. that will lower the school tax portion of your property tax bill, but also freezing property taxes for seniors once they hit 870. Now, we've got a couple of current programs that already in place and we're to keep them there. Yeah. But when there's an increase in your property tax for one year and next, you still have to pay it. I want to stop that. I want to freeze it entirely. And for first-time home buyers, let's cap it at 1% of the market value of the home for the first 5 years of home ownership so young young people can get a start. I want to talk about energy prices. You said you want to take this all of the above approach to energy. So, what is your plan for immediate relief to some of these high energy bills? Some of them are 10% higher than they were last year. First of all, my opponent has put forth an illegitimate plan that is not feasible. There are 77 incumbent Democratic legislators and not one has endorsed her plan. And you have a Democratic governor that went on TV and said, "I don't think you can do that. Here's what I could do on day one. Pull us out of Reggie." The regional greenhouse gas initiative is a carbon tax policy that's costing New Jerseyians anywhere from 300 million to $500 million a year. The Democratic governor of Pennsylvania is not Reggie. We shouldn't be either. It's 7 and a half years of failure. Air's no cleaner. Electricity's gone through the roof and we got to stop sending rateayer dollars to other states. That's the way that carbon tax policy works. Yeah. So, if you do that, would someone see an immediate relief in their immediate relief? There would things that would no longer appear on your monthly electricity bill. Let me say this. We also have to produce more electricity. Okay. So, what is it I'm going to do? I'm going to reopen and repurpose the six or so plants that Phil Murphy has shut down. We're going to expand our nuclear footprint in South Jersey. We're going to lift the unofficial moratorium on the current natural gas fired electricity generation plants. We're going to accelerate solar on all the rooftops of every one of those warehouses that have gone up all around the state. That's not a Nimi issue. and solar developers will tell you that the DP is not cooperative in getting the permits they need to put these solar arrays on these roofs. Those are all the things that we can do. But let me say this, there'll be no wind farms off our Jersey shore. Let me ask you about solar because I know a lot of folks used to get tax rebates and incentives to install those solar panels on their roof, businesses at the same time. Now, President Trump rolled that program back to get those incentives. So, how do you get around to still achieving your goal of more solar if you don't have the incentive to do it because it's costly? Yeah, then we'll pick up the slack here in New Jersey. But I think that's a going forward. I don't think you get cheated if you already made the decision to put the solar arrays on your roof. Uh but let's not forget whenever government gets into the job of subsidizing a whole lot of things, it kind of can distort the market at times. So let's let the free market prevail here. So you're saying you may as a on the state level give an incentive for somebody to get the solar. Listen, if you've already made that investment, your due credits, I think we have to honor the promise that was made at the time you made the investment. Going forward, let's take a look. Uh in September and October, New Jerseyians are receiving this $50 credit on their energy bill. Open up their envelopes. It's built into their bill, right? Some folks were surprised to see that. Would you continue that $50 rebate for how long? My job is to lower electricity rates and we do that by pulling out a Reggie. That's a gimmick. This is once again the Trenton Democrats taking money out of your right-hand pocket, putting a little bit back in your lefthand pocket, trying to get you to feel good about it, and they usually do it right around election time. So, no. So, you wouldn't continue it. I can get the monthly electricity bills down by pulling out a Reggie and producing more juice. And that's exactly what we're going to do. Okay. I want to talk about affordable housing. Will you as the governor of New Jersey enforce a law requiring that every town build affordable housing and how would you enforce it? Absolutely not. We'll go before the Supreme Court on day one and make an argument that I don't think they're aware of that the way we're having this statemandated highdensity housing take place in every one of our 564 towns, including those that have no mass transit, no infrastructure, no jobs, which means we're only putting more cars in the road. This policy is in violation of DP policies with regard to sustain sustainability whether it's on sewer capacity or storm water management. This is an argument that's long overdue and I'm hoping that Supreme Court will agree with me. Otherwise, I'll remind them that I get two new Supreme Court state justice appointments and one of them is the chief justice. So, yeah, it is the law. So, you're saying you would go around that? Not go around it. go before the court and make a new argument just we like we need to do on school funding that shows that what's taking place has had enormous unintended consequences. Now, we need more affordable housing in this state, seniors, disabled people, veterans, young people, but it needs to be consistent with smart growth strategies. I lived in a 52 square mile cow pasture known as Hillsboro Township and we were losing these builder remedy suits. Here's the challenge, Dan. When the state comes in and says that Town X has build needs to build 100 more affordable housing units, the developers come in and say, "Boy, to afford the 100 units you want me to build, I got to build 400 market rate units." Now, the town got 500 units. Now, I just had a press conference this week in Cranberry, which is the poster child for everything that's wrong with this policy. They've got a fourth round obligation, statemandated obligation they've got to meet. They're out of open space. So, what are they doing? using eminent domain to condemn a 175year-old family farm to put up more highdensity housing. First of all, property rights are sacred in this state. Second of all, the eminent domain law was put in place to get rid of get rid of blight. We're going to condemn a farm to put up highdensity housing in a town that doesn't have jobs, mass transit or infrastructure, putting all only more idling cars on the road. It's one of the biggest hypocrisies of the Democratic party that portrays itself as being pro- environment. There's nothing sustainable about this policy. All right, let's talk about immigration. And you said on day one that you will repeal the immigrant trust directive, which currently limits local law enforcement involving uh any involvement with ICE agents. So, with that being repealed on day one, should anybody in the state illegally be deported and turned over to ICE? I've said all along that the president should do his job in securing the border. He has. And I think every governor should do their job to not encourage illegal immigration by having sanctuary sties cities and us being a sanctuary state. I also believe that that kind of policy, it does in fact restrict local law enforcement in terms of administrating certain warrants. And who am I to tell a local mayor that if he wants his police department to work in partnership with a federal agency to keep the community safe, I think that's the jurisdiction of a mayor and they should be allowed to do that. Are there any exceptions though? For for example, a person who may be here illegally, but is a contributing member of society, paying their taxes, has a job, has a family, no criminal record, should they be allowed to stay here? I've said all along that anybody came here illegally that had a history of criminality in their country of origin needs to go back. Anybody who came here illegally who's committed crime or scammed our governmental assistance programs needs to go back. Everyone else, I think, should be given a pathway to recognition. Now, if you've been here 5, 10, 15, 20 years and uh you have not been a burden to the community in any way, haven't scammed our governmental system programs, haven't engaged in criminal activity, if you're a child that was brought here under no power of your own, and you've gone through our public school system, there needs to be a pathway to recognition. Okay. Uh I want to talk about um you have ads right now going after your opponent for what you say is a flip-flop of her supporting the Democratic nominee for mayor of New York City, Doran Mam Donnie. But it's been well documented and you and I have talked about this that you were once critical of President Trump and have since changed positions. You told me last time that JD Vance was also critical and now he's the vice president of the United States. But the greater question is why is it okay for you to change your view as on a person but not her? Because the president had a successful first term and Joe Biden had a terrible four years and because I think the president is right when it comes to securing the border. I think it's right in trying to hit the reset button on the trade deficit so we could bring bluecollar manufacturing like jobs back to the United States. I think he's right on those issues and the Joe Biden administration I saw as a failure. Look what happened at our border. Look at the inflationary increases which by the way my opponent supported. Um so um I think that the president's much better for the country than Joe Biden was with his term. So if what we're saying is that four years from now Mandami ends up being the best mayor of all time for New York City, I guess she has a right to change her mind. Okay. You know, there's been a lot of discussion around political violence in the wake of Charlie Kirk's assassination. You said the rhetoric and the temperature in the country need to come way down. Does that start with the president who while he was at Charlie Kirk's memorial said, "I hate my opponents." Um, listen, I can't control what it is other people say. I've always tried to lead myself in a way that doesn't embarrass my parents' name or my four children. And so that doesn't mean I'm a person without passion. It doesn't mean I'm a person without conviction, but I always try to be very, very respectful with my rhetoric. What I didn't understand is that my opponent skipped two major joint appearances here in New Jersey to go to Washington DC to vote yes on the Charlie Kirk resolution celebrating his life. She had missed like 90% of the votes since she declared for governor, but had to go to Washington for that one, skipping out on two important events. voted yes on the resolution celebrating his life. I commend her. Caught hell from the far left and then issued a statement condemning him, calling him a misogynist and a racist. If that was the case, why did you vote yes on the resolution? So, I did ask her the same question. They were talking about bringing rhetoric down overall. So, what is one thing you respect about your opponent Mikey Cheryl? Despite what it is that happened to her at the Naval Academy, I hope we find out the truth. Like my army captain son, she has served our nation in the military. So, just last week, President Trump and Health Secretary RFK Jr. told pregnant women to not take Tylenol. He also said parents should not give their children Tylenol, linking both of them to autism. Now, Dr. Oz, who's a member of his administration, came out and said, "You know what? Take it when it's appropriate." But you would have your own New Jersey health commissioner in a time when the president is saying that, what would you urge your health commissioner say to follow the science? I think it's really important to follow the science. I'm a big believer in the literature. Has this been documented in the literature? Have people done research? and has that research been published in some of the leading clinical journals in the country and in the world documenting uh that this is in fact true. Florida is also currently taking steps right now to eliminate childhood vaccine mandates. So on your campaign website was taking a look at it. You say you oppose a one-sizefits-all vaccination schedule. So would you explore changing the vaccination requirements for New Jersey students? changing it in this sense. There are a great many people parents who are greatly concerned about the lack of informed consent uh with regard to the vaccinations and also with regard to spreading out the vaccination schedule. It's very different today than it was when my own children were small. It's very different today from when I was small. There is a magnificent volume of vaccines that are given in a very close period of time. And so what a lot of parents are asking for is can we possibly spread out the schedule? But we have in New Jersey a medical exemption. We have in New Jersey a religious exemption and uh the party of my opponent obviously believes in those things because they've controlled the legislature for the last eight years and had the governorship for the last eight years and haven't looked to get rid of either one of those. Okay. So, so you wouldn't be able to change it because they don't want to. Uh listen, my children are vaccinated. I would suggest that people have their children vaccinated, but I also respect the fact that we do have a religious exemption in New Jersey. We do have a medical exemption in New Jersey. And I think that parents should be heard when it comes to spreading out the vaccination schedule if they want to because they're fearful of the volume that's given in such a short amount of time. Okay. I don't know if you're a soccer fan, but are you a soccer fan? Yeah. Not as big as a Yankee fan. Well, okay. But big news for New Jersey is FIFA World Cup of course coming to New Jersey. I'm a big New Jersey fan and this is a great opportunity for New Jersey and I hope we don't blow it like we did with the Super Bowl. So, let me ask you this because tickets, some of the tickets are already on sale and the specialty tickets are well into the thousands of dollars. They haven't gone on sale to the general public just yet. But would you as governor or would would you be able to talk to FIFA put aside a number of tickets? How many? And reduce the cost for New Jersey residents so they'd be able to go to a big event that's in their own backyard. The ultra commercialization of sports and that includes includes collegiate sports is of great concern to me. And what you're finding more and more is that the average Jane and Joe can't even afford to go see a game. I think that's wrong. So how would you fix it? It's a great I that's a great question and we got to figure that out. So, I know technologies are used today to sell tickets and I hear all kinds of stories of the exchanges that go on. So, we got to find out what it is we got to do to make sure the average Jane and Joe can get to a game if they want to. Understood. Giving everybody equal time here. Mr. Cherelli, great to have you. And that concludes our forum with New Jerseys gubanatorial candidates. Remember, election day is November 4th now on Arena. Have a good night.