



COMMUNITY | B1

## SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

Tech school students put talents to the test



SPORTS | C1

## LENAPE RUNS AWAY FROM SHAWNEE

The undefeated Indians won 10-3.

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# Mother shares son's story in D.C.

**Gail Smith, of Mount Laurel, spoke of her son Kenny's struggle with heroin before dying of an overdose in 2016**

By Kelly Kultys  
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WASHINGTON — Gail Smith pulled the microphone close to her mouth and adjusted the picture of her son, Kenny, to her left.

She looked across the table at more than nine members of Congress, before beginning to tell the story of her family — her husband, Chris, of 28 years, her daughter, Jessica,

and her son, Kenny.

“(My husband and I) taught them to be very active in school,” Smith said, highlighting that family and faith were a large part of her children's lives.

The Smiths raised their children in Mount Laurel where they have lived for the past 18 years. However, after his freshman year of high school, Kenny began experimenting with alcohol and drugs.

“From 2010 to 2016, Kenny's curiosity morphed into a full-blown heroin addiction,” she said.

Smith and nine others spoke of their experiences with heroin and opioid addiction

as part of the “Personal Stories from the Opioid Crisis” roundtable Thursday in front of the Health Subcommittee of the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee.

Most of the speakers had lost their child to the opioid epidemic, which took the lives of more than 64,000 Americans in 2016.

One of those was Smith, who, along with her husband, thought they were doing the right thing by sending their son to Florida to receive treatment. He asked for help in May 2016 and left for treatment the

See SMITH, A2



Gail Smith, of Mount Laurel, holds a photo of her son, Kenny, who died from a heroin/fentanyl overdose in 2016, outside of the Rayburn Building in Washington, D.C. on Thursday. (KELLY KULTYS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST)

## Reelin' in



Jim Lenegan, of Evesham, tries to reel in rainbow trout that were recently stocked at the lake in Laurel Acres Park in Mount Laurel on Thursday. Temperatures are expected to warm up in the coming days and into next week. For the extended forecast, see page B3. (NANCY ROKOS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST)

## Sanders backing Booker's federal marijuana bill

By David Levinsky  
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One of Sen. Cory Booker's potential rivals for the 2020 presidential nomination is backing his bid to legalize marijuana on the federal level.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders became the third senator to sign on as a co-sponsor of Booker's Marijuana Justice Act on Thursday, joining Oregon's Ron Wyden and New York's Kirsten Gillibrand.

Booker and Sanders are both considered among the top contenders to become the Democrats' presidential nominee in two years.

Sanders announced his support in a live video on Facebook with Booker, saying the federal government needs to “fundamentally rethink our attitude toward marijuana.”

“People increasingly understand that prohibition didn't work in the 1920s. It's not going to work now,” Sanders said. “You have got one half of the American people who have smoked or are smoking marijuana. You think you can have laws making it illegal for what the majority of the American people are doing?”

Booker concurred and noted the disparity of drug arrests of poor minorities rather than wealthier white marijuana users.

“We have marijuana legalization already for people who are privileged,” he said, pointing to marijuana use on college campuses nationwide, which is largely overlooked, compared to the justice handed down to minorities in inner cities.

See BILL, A8

## Murphy hits back against Abbott

By David Levinsky  
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TRENTON — Move over Eagles vs. Cowboys.

There's a new rivalry brewing, this one between New Jersey and its

Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy and Texas and its chief executive, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

The two state leaders entered into a war of words surrounding their respective state's taxes, jobs and governments this week in the

form of dueling opinion columns published in their rival state's largest newspaper.

Abbott, who has served as Texas' governor since 2015 and is up for re-election this fall, started the donnybrook

See MURPHY, A2



SPORTS | C1

## EMBIID DROPS 23 IN RETURN TO SIXERS

Philadelphia took a 2-1 lead in their playoff series against the Heat

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# NEWS

## LOTTERY

### Thursday (4-19-18)

**New Jersey**  
**Pick 3**  
 7-7-4, Fireball: 3  
**Pick 4**  
 1-6-3-7, Fireball: 3  
**Cash 5**  
 21-26-28-33-43, Xtra: 2  
**Pick 6**  
 2-10-20-33-39-49, Xtra: 2  
**Midday Pick 3**  
 8-8-9, Fireball: 5  
**Midday Pick 4**  
 2-8-9-7, Fireball: 5

**Pennsylvania**  
**Cash 5**  
 2-9-12-14-37  
**Match 6 Lotto**  
 2-7-11-29-37-39  
**Pick 2 Day**  
 9-9, Wild: 3  
**Pick 2 Evening**  
 2-1, Wild: 2  
**Pick 3 Day**  
 3-7-2, Wild: 3  
**Pick 3 Evening**  
 4-8-9, Wild: 2  
**Pick 4 Day**  
 3-3-0-5, Wild: 3  
**Pick 4 Evening**  
 6-5-5-7, Wild: 2  
**Pick 5 Day**  
 6-0-1-0-3, Wild: 3  
**Pick 5 Evening**  
 5-0-7-7-4, Wild: 2  
**Treasure Hunt**  
 3-6-12-25-29

**Multistate**  
**Cash4Life (4-19-18)**  
 4-15-28-35-42, Cash Ball: 2  
**Powerball (4-18-18)**  
 9-10-12-17-23, Powerball: 9  
**Mega Millions (4-17-18)**  
 12-34-44-47-65, Mega Ball: 22

## ONLINE POLL

**Thursday's results:** Did you file your taxes on time?  
**A.) Yes: 94%**  
**B.) No: 6%**

94% 6%

**Today's question:** Do you think the arrest of two men at a Philadelphia Starbucks was the result of racial profiling?  
**A.) Yes**  
**B.) No**

Vote online at [burlingtoncountytimes.com](http://burlingtoncountytimes.com)

# Police investigating apparent hate crime

By David Levinsky  
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**MOUNT HOLLY** — Township police are investigating an apparent hate crime earlier this month involving a Muslim woman whose tire was flattened by someone who left a note that said “Go Home ... terrorist.”

The incident happened April 11 outside 24-year-old resident Kenya Robinson’s apartment on Cherry Street and is being investigated as a bias crime.

Robinson, who is Muslim and wears a hijab, told a Fox 29 news reporter that she was leaving her home to go purchase groceries when she noticed her tire was flat with a paper note beneath it.

The note said: “Go home (racial slur) terrorist. You not wanted here

(expletive). USA USA USA”

“I was just shocked. I didn’t know what to say, how to feel. I didn’t know there were people left like this in the world. ... It was ridiculous,” Robinson told the reporter in the interview, which she also recorded and posted on her Facebook page.

“I was just thinking like ‘I’m home. I’m from New Jersey. Where do you want me to go? I can’t go no further.’ I kinda laughed but I was mad because I didn’t want my kids to see me upset,” she said.

Robinson also said she had moved to Mount Holly from Salem County last month so her two children could attend a better school. The incident has left her shaken and wanting to move, she said.

“If it wasn’t for Mount Holly Police I wouldn’t know what to do. They

were such a big help. I’ve never met police officers in my life that have done what they do. They patrol around my house all night now. They knock on my door to make sure I’m safe and that we’re fine. They walk around my car at night now just to make sure nothing else is done to my car,” she said during the interview.

Mount Holly police spokeswoman Officer Deborah Brewer said an investigation into the incident is ongoing and the department could not specify if any suspect or suspects have been identified.

“Mount Holly police take this matter very seriously,” Brewer said Thursday. “It’s an active investigation so I can’t comment further.”

According to available New Jersey State Police crime statistics, Mount Holly last investigated a bias incident in 2013,

when it reported two bias crimes. Details on those incidents were not available.

In 2016, the most recent year statistics were available, there were a total of 24 bias incidents investigated throughout Burlington County, one less than in 2015.

Ten of those incidents in the county that year involved harassment and seven were described as criminal mischief. One was listed as a simple assault, according to the New Jersey State Police reports.

Robinson said she has received some gift bags from neighbors as a gesture of support, but that she remains cautious.

“One bad apple spoils the bunch,” she said. “I don’t know what they think is going on or what they think is happening, but it has nothing to do with me or my family. We just want to live like

everyone else. That’s all we want to do.”

Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-3rd of Toms River, on Thursday called the incident disgusting and a hateful attack on Twitter and said it had no place in the community. He also said he reached out to Robinson’s family after learning of the incident to offer her his office’s help and support.

“Kenya and her family should feel safe and welcome in their home as fellow New Jerseyans, not victimized because of their race or religion,” MacArthur said. “This kind of hate is immoral, unacceptable, and un-American. Those are not our values, and I have full faith that our local law enforcement will bring the person responsible for this act of hate to justice.”

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call Mount Holly police at 609-267-0170.

## SMITH

From Page A1

day after Mother’s Day.

“And I thought what could be a better Mother’s Day gift?” she said. “I’m going to get my son back.”

But Kenny relapsed while in Florida.

His mother said she believed he got the drugs while he was out of the center on a day pass. After that he was kicked out of the treatment center before bouncing to six other treatment centers in the span of four months.

Kenny ended up living in a sober home, his mother said, run by Bradley Vercosa, who was charged in October with patient brokering — an illegal practice of accepting referral fees from health care facilities in exchange for taking in patients.

His body was found with a mix of heroin, fentanyl and carfentanyl in



**Smith holds a photo of her son Kenny Smith, who died from a heroin/fentanyl overdose in 2016.** [KELLY KULTYS / STAFF PHOTOJOURNALIST]

his system on August 16, 2016, three weeks after his 21st birthday.

“Kenny got trapped in the ‘web’ of a treatment center and sober-living home scam,” said Smith, who created a foundation in her son’s honor called

the Kenny Smith Freedom Foundation,

Michael Burgess, R-Texas, chairman of the subcommittee, said the experiences of Smith and other families shows why lawmakers must be diligent to make

sure legislation must be drafted to address the problem.

“We can do as much harm if we get it wrong,” he said.

Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas, said Smith’s story highlighted some of

the wrongs in the current system.

“You were taken advantage of by people supposed to be helping,” he said.

Representative Greg Walden, R-Oregon and chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee, thanked attendees for sharing their stories.

“I cannot imagine how difficult this is for you,” he added.

The roundtable was held to allow lawmakers to hear from those “in the trenches,” Walden said, before they began discussing and marking up a package of about 60 bills next week related to opioid addiction.

Afterward, Smith said she felt that the representatives were listening and could put some of the testimony into action.

“It felt validating,” she said. “It felt like someone heard the devastation that’s going on and that somebody’s going to do something about.”

## MURPHY

From Page A1

by penning a guest column published Tuesday in the Newark Star-Ledger that invited tax-weary New Jersey residents and businesses to consider relocating to the Lone Star State.

“I’d like to throw a life-line to businesses and families throughout New Jersey who are looking for greater economic opportunity and relief from high taxes. Come to Texas and be a part of our economic success story,” Abbott wrote in the opinion piece, which cited the southern state’s lack of a state income tax, booming economy and job growth.

Murphy, who is approaching his 100th day in office since succeeding Republican Chris Christie in January, fired back with his own column published in the Dallas Morning News that said New Jersey is “moving in a new direction” and

“making exciting progress” in delivering “good value for our money and good values for all our people.”

“For too long, New Jersey put the wealthy and big corporations ahead of ordinary people, and it failed miserably,” Murphy wrote. “Now we’re moving in a stronger and fairer direction, and Abbott would greatly benefit from taking a closer look at the strategy.”

He claimed to be shocked by Abbott’s attack and that it was his duty to stand up for the Garden State’s reputation.

“I understand Texas pride. Heck, I respect that. But let’s be clear, as governor of New Jersey, I won’t let anyone get away with taking a cheap shot at my state.”

Abbott’s words were mostly directed at Murphy’s proposed \$37.4 billion state budget and its some \$1.5 billion in tax increases, including an increase in the state’s sales tax and extending it to ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft, as well



**Gov. Phil Murphy and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott have entered into a war of words surrounding their respective state’s taxes, jobs and governments this week in the form of dueling opinion columns.** [ARCHIVE PHOTO]

as a higher income tax rate on earnings over \$1 million.

“In Texas, we’re focused on lowering taxes, not raising them. We believe that free enterprise, not top-down government policies, is the key to a prosperous economy,” Abbott wrote. “That’s why we are committed to ensuring that families and businesses in the Lone Star State keep more of their hard-earned money.”

Murphy countered that Abbott “puts the powerful first in his state” and that New Jersey businesses “know better.”

He then noted that Texas’s economic ranking has plummeted from 3rd to 21th in “Governing” magazine’s most recent state rankings (New Jersey was 24th) and that New Jersey offers a host of benefits, including location and top-ranked public schools, colleges and universities and hospitals.

Murphy also cited New Jersey’s lower violent crime rate compared to Texas, its stronger gun laws, and its higher median family income.

“It’s simple. If you’d like to be part of an economic revival in a state that recognizes the value of investments in public education, creates welcoming communities that protect LGBTQ residents and immigrants, defends a woman’s right to reproductive health care, then New Jersey is the place for you or your business,” he wrote, adding that his state still has “work to

do” to grow its economy and improve its financial standings.

He said businesses that choose to remain in New Jersey or relocate here are making a “the best bet you’ve ever made.”

Murphy’s defense of New Jersey’s reputation drew praise from Tom Bracken, president of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

“We know the governor is advocating for a stronger and fairer New Jersey, but equally as important, he is fighting for our state,” Bracken said in a

statement. “His timely and strong response to Texas Gov. Abbott’s unwarranted solicitation of our citizens and businesses was needed and was delivered. Thank you governor for your leadership.”

Although Bracken praised the governor for his response to Abbott, representatives of the chamber and other state business advocates have spoken against several of Murphy’s proposed tax increases, including the sales tax hike, millionaires tax and ride-hailing tax.

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