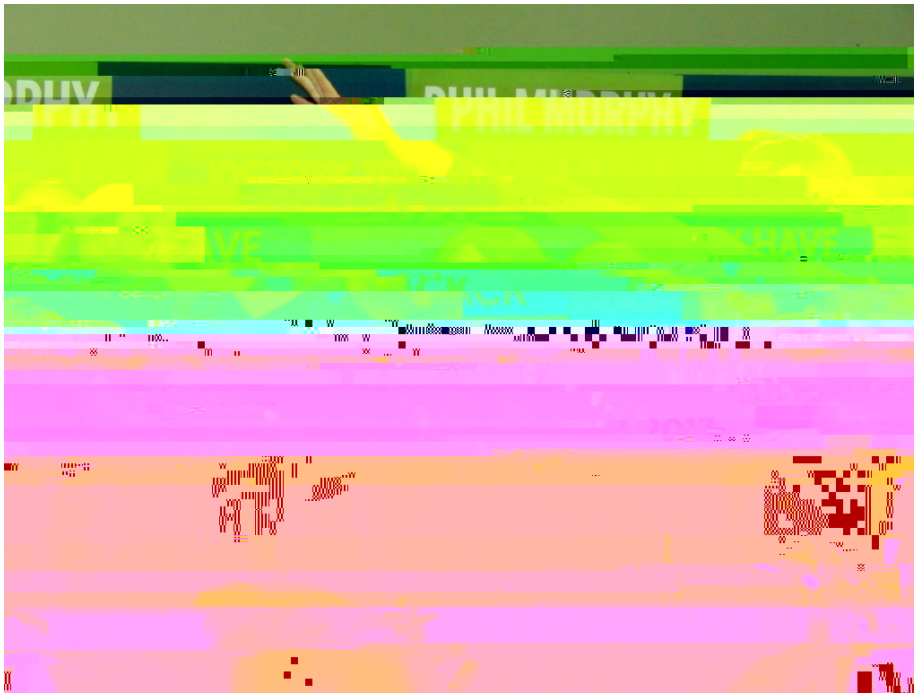


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By Guest Contributor | March 30, 2018, 11:59 am | in **Columnist** (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/columnist/>)



BY CARL GOLDEN

For Gov. Phil Murphy, a promise to sign into law a package of six bills to tighten New Jersey's regulations on gun purchases and ownership was an easy call.

It was also the correct call.

It was a decision not reached under duress or pressure, nor was it a knee jerk reaction to the "March for Our Lives" protests across the country.

Tightening the state's already strict firearms laws was a major component in Murphy's campaign last year, part of his criticism of Gov. Chris Christie who vetoed the bills in an effort to curry political favor for his ill-considered candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination.

Murphy is certainly not a last-minute convert to stronger gun control measures and his signature on the legislation would not only fulfill a campaign promise but is in line with the expressed desires of a majority of New Jerseyans.

Whether Murphy will get the chance to scribble his name across the bottom of the bills and attract a fair amount of national attention for taking a leadership role in dealing with a high-profile issue, however, has become slightly problematic.

Standing in the way — at least for the moment — is, not surprisingly, Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-Gloucester), who has yet to weigh in on any of the bills in the package.

While the Assembly — with bipartisan support — approved the bills, none has been posted for consideration in the Senate and, in point of fact, two have no sponsors in the upper house.

With dictatorial control over the flow of legislation to the floor for consideration, Sweeney holds a strong hand, indeed, over the governor's agenda.

He has already broken with Murphy over tax policy, school aid and budget priorities in what is increasingly