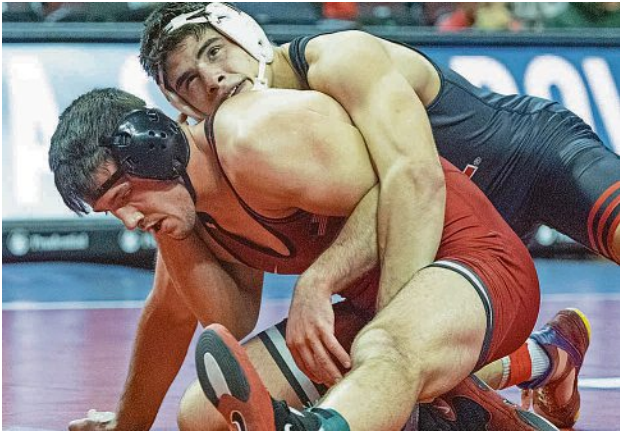




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Board taps Bragen for superintendent

Cheryl Makin
MyCentralJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

SOUTH BRUNSWICK – In a move reminiscent of a game of musical chairs, the Board of Education appointed Bernard Bragen Jr. as the superintendent of schools during a special meeting on Oct. 27.

Bragen, formerly the superintendent



Bragen

Business Administrator David Pawlowski who has served as interim superintendent since longtime schools chief

of schools in Edison, has been interim superintendent in Old Bridge since Sept. 1. He will begin in South Brunswick on Dec. 1.

Bragen takes the reins from South Brunswick

Scott Feder retired Sept. 1.

Old Bridge was expected to name their replacement for Bragen on Oct. 28.

“We are very excited to welcome our new Superintendent and the new fearless leader of the South Brunswick School District,” stated Board of Education President Laura Hernandez.

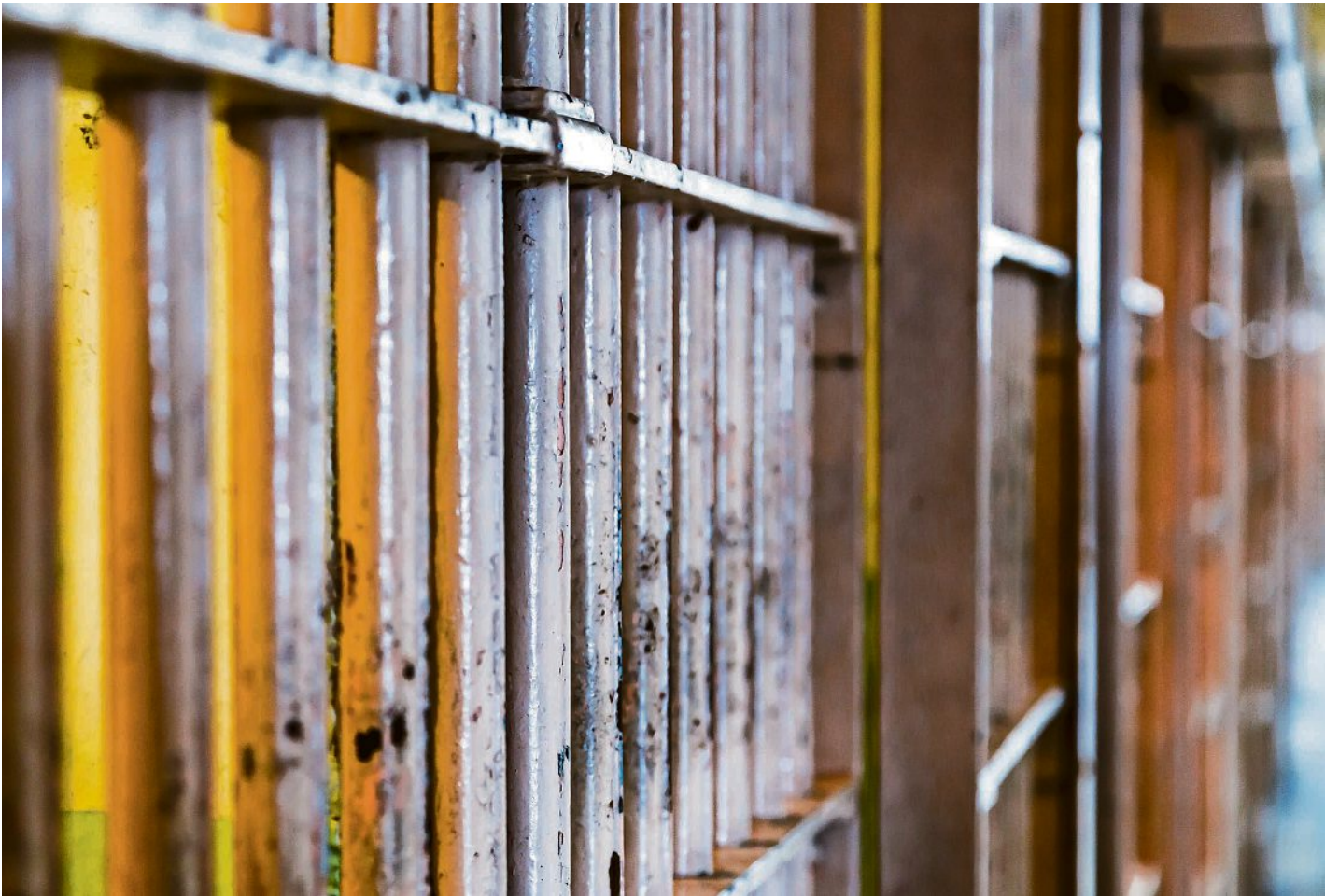
Bragen has worked in education for more than 30 years. He resigned July 11 from his post as superintendent of

Montgomery County Public Schools in Christiansburg, Virginia. He left Edison for Virginia in 2022.

In an announcement on social media, the South Brunswick school district said Bragen “is a passionate and accomplished educational leader, deeply committed to excellence, innovation and student achievement.”

See BRAGEN, Page 2A

How has bail reform impacted NJ?



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

A look at the arguments and the data

Amanda Wallace
NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Nearly nine years after New Jersey overhauled its bail system, the topic of bail reform remains a divisive one.

On a national level, and in the Garden State, the debate for and against cashless bail has persisted. This discourse recently has been highlighted among the candidates for New Jersey’s next governor and amid action from the federal government.

In most U.S. states, legal systems use cash bonds, a type of bail that requires a defendant to pay a monetary amount set by a judge to be released from custody while awaiting trial. That sum is used as collateral, ensuring that the defendant will appear in court when necessary.

After the accused makes their necessary appearances, the money will be returned. Otherwise, the bail money is forfeited to the government.

Over the years, multiple states have

or have started working to curb or eliminate the use of cash bail, with supporters arguing that it negatively impacts lower-income defendants and discriminates against people of color.

In New Jersey, for example, instead of imposing a monetary amount of bail, judges use a risk-based system to determine whether a defendant should be released and on what conditions.

Opponents of bail reform, on the other hand, argue that cashless bail poses a risk to public safety and removes the incentive for defendants to appear in court.

President Donald Trump has long contested bail reform, criticizing Democratic states and cities that allow defendants to be released without posting cash bail.

On Aug. 25, the president signed an executive order aimed at requiring cash bail. The mandate threatened to revoke federal funding for jurisdictions that allow suspects to be released without posting a bond, USA TODAY reported. That same day, as reported by USA TO-

DAY, Trump signed another order, instructing police in Washington, D.C. to charge suspects with federal crimes and hold them in federal custody to avoid releasing them without posting a bond.

“We’re ending it,” Trump said of cashless bail.

Closer to home, ahead of New Jersey’s gubernatorial election on Nov. 4, candidates Jack Ciattarelli and Mikie Sherrill have also made clear their thoughts on bail reform.

Here’s where they stand. Ciattarelli has said that he aims to reform bail reform, his campaign website reading, “Jack will fix ‘Bail Reform’ loopholes that currently allow violent and repeat offenders to walk free by appointing conservative state judges and county prosecutors, as well as revising the bail reform law to toughen rules governing juvenile offenders.”

The former assemblyman doubled down on his stance during a Q&A with members of the New Jersey State PBA for its Aug. 25 podcast, adding that, if elected, his attorney general will support him in revising bail reform.

See BAIL REFORM, Page 8A

Measure to ban bamboo takes root

Suzanne Russell
MyCentralJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

HIGHLAND PARK – The borough has followed several other Middlesex County towns as it looks to prohibit bamboo planting.

The Borough Council last week unanimously approved the introduction of an ordinance banning the planting of the invasive and destructive plant species.

Councilman Matthew Hersh noted the residential planting of bamboo has already been prohibited in the neighboring towns of Edison, Piscataway and Sayreville and now Highland Park is moving forward on doing the same.

“This will not penalize existing properties but will make sure bamboo is contained to the property,” said Hersh, a liaison to the borough’s Environmental Commission which has been working on getting the ordinance on the council’s agenda this year.

See BAMBOO, Page 2A

Sherrill outspending Ciattarelli in race for governor

Katie Sobko
NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Both major candidates in the New Jersey gubernatorial election have filed the required 11-day preelection paperwork with the state Election Law Enforcement Commission to disclose how their campaigns have spent money and what reserves they still have.

Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill and Republican former Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli both submitted the paperwork late Friday afternoon.

Sherrill has more money stashed away as her campaign heads into its final week.

See GOVERNOR, Page 2A

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