STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, New Jersey's Tobacco 21 law prohibits the sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and other vaping products, to persons under the age of 21, and the Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act (CREAMMA) prohibits the sale of cannabis and cannabis products to persons under the age of 21; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that e-cigarettes remain the most used tobacco product among youth and that, among students who had ever used e-cigarettes, 43.6 percent reported current use in 2024. Additionally, 30.7% of students across the US reported using cannabis products in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey reported that 24.9 percent of high school students had tried a tobacco or nicotine product and that 30.9 percent of current e-cigarette users purchased these products themselves; and

WHEREAS, We Card Awareness Month promotes education and training among New Jersey retailers to increase awareness of and compliance with federal, state, and local laws governing the sale of tobacco, vapor, and other age-restricted products; and

WHEREAS, 2026 marks 31 years of education and training by THE "WE CARD" PROGRAM, INC., a national nonprofit organization that provides retailers with resources to promote responsible retailing and prevent the sale of age-restricted products to underage individuals; and

WHEREAS, the We Card program is supported by the New Jersey Coalition for Responsible Retailing, whose members include the New Jersey Food Council, the New Jersey Wholesale Marketers Association, and the New Jersey Retail Merchants Association, which work to increase awareness of responsible retailing practices and prevent youth access to age-restricted products, including tobacco and vapor products; and; and

WHEREAS, retailers participating in the "We Card Retailer Pledge" commit to identifying and denying underage purchase attempts and helping prevent the unlawful provision of tobacco, vapor, and other age-restricted products to persons under the age of 21; and

WHEREAS, education, training, and collaboration among public health and safety partners, community organizations, and responsible retailers strengthen compliance with age-of-sale laws and advance New Jersey's commitment to protecting youth from the harmful effects of age-restricted products, such as cannabis, tobacco, and other nicotine products; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey residents benefit from a responsible retailing community committed to preventing underage access to tobacco, vapor, and other age-restricted products and fostering healthier communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mikie Sherrill, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

SEPTEMBER 2026
AS
WE CARD AWARENESS MONTH

in the Garden State.

GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this tenth day of September in the year two thousand twenty-six, the two hundred fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States.

Lt. GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR