## Opinion: High taxes, high costs a e endemic to NJ. Can Mu phy find a cu e?

CARL OL EN

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His r p at  $\,$  r f r nc s to affor ability," th political buzzwor of 2022, in icat it will b th thrust of his m ssag .

## Add essing NJ's high cost of living

It's mor pr cis finition an th path towar achi ving it ar rath r vagu, but Murphy's pr s ntation may fill in som of th blanks or, at th v ry l ast, provi sugg stions to a r ss growing complaints that th high cost of living has l to an xo us whil at th sam tim pr s nting a ma or obstacl to thos who wish to r main an mak th ir way up th conomic la r.

In a stat in which the mode in a stat in which the mode is a slightly more than \$5,000, the average cost of a home is \$440,000 and the average property tax now at \$9,2.4, affor a bility appears hop 1 ssly out of reach for many.

En rgy costs an auto insuranc pr miums — particularly with an un rag riv r in th family — a to th v ry ay bur n of n c ssary xp ns s.

It is on of the most xp nsive states in the nation in which to live an eproperty tax sir main the principal culprit.

In his post- I ction comments, Murphy creation it his a ministration for holding the average property-tax increase last year to 1.9% although in out-of-pock to ollars it remains the high stin the nation.

In a subs qu nt burst of I ction uphoria, h ass rt h wasn't satisfi with m r ly bragging about slowing th rat of incr as but int n to work towar prop rty-tax r uctions — a goal that has lu all his pr c ssors.

With about 53% of property-tax revinue in cteto public ucation, governors have relieved almost exclusively on annual budget increases in state ai as the most in cteway to exercise to public ucation,

Murphy has follow that patt