



Lowering the Cost of  
**FOOD**

**JOSH**  
**FOR JERSEY**  
★ **GOVERNOR** ★

Josh's "Lower Costs Plan for Jersey"

## **V. LOWER THE PRICE OF FOOD**

### **OUR CHALLENGE**

You remember how President Donald Trump promised to lower egg prices “immediately” upon taking office? Well, today, egg prices are up 53 percent from a year ago, according to the Labor Department: The average cost was \$2.51 a year ago, compared to \$4.95 today; in the New York metro area, the average cost for a dozen eggs is \$6.72.

Under Trump, the problem is only set to get worse. The Bird Flu outbreak has killed more than 136 million birds in the last nine months and 30 million in just the last three — roughly 10 percent of the nation’s egg-laying population that has been lost in the last 90 days, driving up the price of eggs and poultry. What has Trump done in response to this impending crisis? Ordered the government to stop communicating about it with anyone. As with COVID, President Trump’s response to the Bird Flu is to stick his head in the sand like an ostrich, and even fire the government workers tasked with tackling the Bird Flu.

That’s not leadership.

### **MY RECORD**

In response, I have called on President Trump to immediately reverse his decision to halt all communication at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the recent Bird Flu outbreak that is driving costs up for families. In particular, I have demanded that federal agencies restore communication with grocers, farmers, and producers, and I’ve called for a coordinated government response to help contain and solve this outbreak.

But I’ve gone further: I introduced legislation in Congress to help lower the cost of a family’s grocery bill, tackle rising food prices and the supply chain crisis, and take action against any meat or poultry companies that are colluding and making profits on the backs of hard-working middle class families.

A study by Consumer Affairs found food price increases in New Jersey to be the fifth highest in the nation. Families are now spending eleven percent of their income on food — that's the highest in three decades. And, it's not just eggs.

When it comes to meat prices, the four largest meat-packing processors control 85 percent of the market. In other words, there is very little competition, so the big four can, in effect, control production and, in turn, the prices.

There are not enough meat distributors to drive competition and bring prices down. The Agriculture Department said just last month that it expects higher pork and beef prices in 2025 — as meatpackers cut back on their production. When large meat distributors scheme and jack up the costs on our local markets, they stick it to our local businesses and families. This is not the ranchers — it's the packers. I'm a capitalist, and one of the core views of any capitalist is competition. Monopolists that collude to corner a market aren't capitalists. They're crooks.

First, we need to stop any meat or poultry companies that have or are continuing to collude, jack up prices, and rip off hard-working middle class families here in Jersey and across our country. I'll be introducing new legislation — the Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act — that will direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to appoint a special investigator to strictly enforce price-fixing laws for the meat packing industry and do everything they can to encourage new meat producers to enter the market. This will help create much-needed competition in the meat and poultry industry, strengthen the food supply chain, get prices down, and help our families.

Second, I cosponsored legislation to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on grocery costs to United States consumers, and I introduced the Lower Grocery Prices Act. This bill will require the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to create a comprehensive national plan to combat high prices and deliver critical relief to families struggling with everyday expenses.

## **AS YOUR GOVERNOR**

That's the same aggressive approach to holding down out-of-pocket costs for Jersey families that I'll bring to the Governor's Office.

- **Attack High Food Prices at the Source.**  
I'll direct our state Attorney General to identify and combat anticompetitive and anti-consumer practices, especially the meat and poultry industries, to crack down on agricultural price-fixers — just as I'm pushing USDA to do at the federal level.
- **Go After Meat Processor Monopolies.**  
Just like the bill I introduced at the federal level, I will direct the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) to appoint a special investigator to strictly enforce price-fixing laws for the meat packing industry and do everything possible to encourage new meat producers to enter the market.

- **Expand In-State Food Production.**

Everyone knows that Jersey is a top producer of cranberries and blueberries — but we also rank in the Top Ten nationally in ten other crops. In fact, we grow 100 different varieties of produce, and more than one-quarter of our state’s land is preserved as farmland. We need to increase local food production and create more regional supply chains, with a particular emphasis on farm-to-table, to produce more food in Jersey and then consume it in Jersey — keeping prices down and keeping our wealth in-state.