



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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With the state Assembly in play in 2015, contributions by special interest political action committees (PACs) in New Jersey jumped 60 percent to \$17.8 million, according to a new analysis by the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

TABLE 1
PAC CONTRIBUTION TRENDS
2009-2015

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PAC Contributions to State and Local candidates and parties in NJ*	NA	NA	\$18,014,998	\$ 8,929,281	\$22,140,110	\$11,130,655	\$17,809,502
Change (%)	NA	NA	NA	-50%	148%	-50%	60%
Total PAC Contributions	\$35,445,360	\$28,198,556	\$34,313,085	\$28,444,172	\$61,351,258	\$35,779,962	\$43,668,674
Change (%)	39.4%	-20%	22%	-17%	116%	-42%	+22%
State Elections	Governor and Assembly	None	Senate and Assembly	None	Governor, Senate and Assembly	None	Assembly

*Excludes contributions to out-of-state and New Jersey federal candidates.

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said PAC spending tends to rise and fall depending on whether there is a state election. "While only the Assembly was up for reelection last year, special interest groups still upped the ante considerably," he said. "Legislative candidates received the bulk of the contributions."

Brindle noted that studies have shown that incumbents tend to receive most PAC money.

"Assuming that was the case last year, it helped Democrats increase their margin by four seats to the largest Democratic majority since 1979," he said. Democrats now maintain a 52-to-28 advantage in the lower house, which they have dominated since 2001.

ELEC began breaking out non-federal, New Jersey-only PAC contributions in 2011 because many PAC reports filed by national groups include their contributions to out-of-state and New Jersey federal candidates. The smaller number gives a more accurate picture of PAC activity within the state. For instance, New Jersey-only PAC spending rose by 60 percent even though overall totals climbed just 22 percent to \$43.7 million.

Among the 344 PACs that spent funds in 2015, the top 25 were dominant. Eighty-nine percent of PAC contributions went to county parties, 62 percent to state parties, 66 percent to local committees and other PACs, and 59 percent to legislators. The top 25 PACs made 65 percent of all PAC contributions in 2015.

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**TABLE 2
TOP 25 PAC CONTRIBUTORS IN 2015
TO NEW JERSEY CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES***

NAME	LEGISLATIVE	STATE PARTIES	COUNTY PARTIES	LOCAL/OTHER PACS	TOTAL
NJ State Laborers PAC	\$ 793,900	\$50,000	\$ 208,300	\$ 278,650	\$ 1,330,850
Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters NJ Political Education Committee	\$ 447,615	\$25,000	\$ 477,400	\$ 359,137	\$ 1,309,152
International Union of Operating Engineering Local 825	\$ 734,700	\$50,000	\$ 175,900	\$ 254,808	\$ 1,215,408
NJ Education Association PAC	\$ 461,375	\$ 25,000	\$ 283,650	\$ 143,450	\$ 913,475
IBEW Local #351	\$ 216,350	\$ 25,000	\$ 195,000	\$ 260,448	\$ 696,798
CWA NJ Political Education Committee	\$ 276,350	\$ 23,500	\$ 75,000	\$ 295,700	\$ 670,550
Local Union 164 IBEW Cope Fund	\$ 169,860	\$ 23,500	\$ 76,800	\$ 154,232	\$ 424,392
Realtors PAC	\$ 319,060	\$ 20,600	\$ 8,500	\$ 64,184	\$ 412,344
NJ Association of Justice	\$ 362,295	\$ 22,500	0	0	\$ 384,795
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 9	\$ 180,000	\$ 8,500	\$ 23,700	\$ 128,175	\$ 340,375
Leaders Fund	0	0	\$ 3,500	\$ 278,200	\$ 281,700
NJ Organization for a Better State	\$ 265,800	0	0	\$ 9,200	\$ 275,000
District Council of Northern NJ- Association of Bridge, Structural & Ornamental Ironworkers PAC Fund	\$ 38,900	\$ 500	\$ 44,100	\$ 186,160	\$ 269,660
IBEW LU 456 Cope Fund	\$ 162,450	\$ 26,000	\$ 39,000	\$ 35,340	\$ 262,790
Local 102 IBEW PAC	\$ 147,425	\$ 25,600	\$ 17,250	\$ 67,150	\$ 257,425
Plumbers Local 24 PAC	\$ 101,670		\$ 40,900	\$ 104,415	\$ 246,985
1199/SEIU NY State Political Action Fund	\$ 187,150	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,500	\$ 45,750	\$ 243,400
IUPAT District Council 711 PAC Fund	\$ 106,350	\$ 2,300	\$ 16,995	\$ 96,959	\$ 222,604
IBEW- (Trenton)	\$ 115,025	\$ 1,000	\$ 58,950	\$ 45,775	\$ 220,750
NJ Apartment Association PAC	\$ 194,350	\$ 2,500		\$ 7,200	\$ 204,050
Developers PAC	\$ 155,950	\$ 10,000		\$ 12,500	\$ 178,450
Teamsters (Democrat Republican Independent Voter Education)	\$ 30,000	\$ 18,000		\$ 114,850	\$ 162,850
NJ Funeral Directors PAC	\$ 159,145				\$ 159,145
IBEW Local Union 400 PAC Committee	\$ 79,855		\$ 26,760	\$ 52,380	\$ 158,995
Local 322 Committee for Political Education Plumbers and Pipefitters	\$ 60,650		\$ 26,300	\$ 67,993	\$ 154,943
TOTALS- TOP 25 PACS	\$5,766,225	\$365,500	\$1,802,505	\$3,062,655	\$10,996,884
TOTALS- ALL PACS REGISTERED WITH ELEC	\$9,731,317	\$585,795	\$2,014,591	\$4,640,837	\$16,969,740
TOP 25 AS % OF TOTAL PAC SPENDING	59%	62%	89%	66%	65%

IBEW= International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers;
SEIU=Service Employees International Union;
CWA=Communications Workers of America;
IUPAT=International Union of Painters and Allied Trades.
*Only includes PACs filing reports with ELEC

In a year with all 80 Assembly seats in contention, contributions to legislative candidates in 2015 more than doubled to \$10.3 million from \$4.1 million in 2014, which had no state election. The lion's share of PAC contributions- 58 percent- went to legislative committees.

**TABLE 3
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY PACS IN 2015 TO
NEW JERSEY CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES***

RECIPIENT	AMOUNT	PERCENT**
Legislative	\$ 10,293,972	58%
Local	\$ 2,580,295	14%
Other PACs	\$ 2,337,649	13%
County Parties	\$ 2,014,591	11%
State Parties	\$ 585,795	3%
Gubernatorial/ Inaugural	(\$ -2,800)	NA
TOTAL	\$ 17,809,502	100%

*Includes PACs not filing reports with ELEC. Excludes federal candidates.

**Individual numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Continuing a long trend, unions again were the major PAC contributors in 2015. They gave \$11.8 million to state and local candidates and committees- about 66 percent of all PAC contributions.

**TABLE 4
2015 SPENDING IN
NEW JERSEY BY PAC TYPE***

TYPE	AMOUNT	PERCENT
Union	\$ 11,811,678	66%
Professional	\$ 2,350,523	13%
Trade Association	\$ 1,249,655	7%
Ideological	\$ 1,090,037	6%
Regulated Industries	\$ 617,713	3%
Business	\$ 418,601	2%
Other Ongoing	\$ 271,294	2%
TOTAL	\$ 17,809,502	100%

*Includes PACs not filing reports with ELEC

“While PAC spending is a traditional way for special interest groups to flex their political clout, it is one of many potential strategies,” said Brindle. He noted that some groups rely heavily on lobbying. Increasingly, he added, groups are using federal Super PACs and other groups to make independent contributions.

“Special interest groups may use one or all of these forms to influence the governmental and electoral processes,” said Brindle.

For instance, state-regulated industries including gas and electric utilities, insurance, water and cable companies are barred by law from making direct campaign contributions and do minimal spending through employee PACs. On the other hand, they spend considerable amounts on direct lobbying of state officials.

In 2015, New Jersey Education Association not only spent heavily on lobbying but was also actively involved in the legislative campaign both through its PAC and independent spending. Its outlays totaled nearly \$14.9 million.

Six of the top ten most politically active special interest groups were unions. Unions also were heavily involved in Forward NJ, a group seeking passage of a long-term transportation funding plan.

**TABLE 5
TOP SPECIAL INTEREST SPENDING IN 2015
INCLUDING GROUPS WITHOUT PAC SPENDING**

RANK	GROUP	PAC CONTRIBUTIONS	LOBBYING	INDEPENDENT SPENDING	TOTAL
1	NJ Education Association	\$ 913,475	\$10,348,911	\$3,623,322	\$14,885,708
2	Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters NJ Political Education Committee	\$1,309,152	\$ 328,076	\$1,261,323	\$ 2,898,551
3	AARP NJ	None	\$ 1,723,847	None	\$ 1,723,847
4	NJ State Laborers PAC/ Growing Economic Opportunities PAC	\$1,330,850	\$ 241,750	\$ 69,362	\$ 1,641,962
5	International Union of Operating Engineering Local 825	\$1,215,408	\$ 341,666	None	\$ 1,557,074
6	Realtors PAC/ NJ Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization PAC	\$ 412,344	\$ 458,321	\$ 385,060	\$ 1,255,725
7	CWA NJ PEC	\$ 670,550	\$ 72,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 992,550
8	Forward NJ	None	\$ 934,798	None	\$ 934,798
9	IBEW Local #351	\$ 696,798	None	\$ 140,000	\$ 836,798
10	Prudential Financial Inc.	None	\$ 807,855	None	\$ 807,855

AARP= American Association of Retired Persons

CWA=Communications Workers of America

IBEW=International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Technically known in New Jersey as continuing political committees, PACs generally are required to file detailed reports with ELEC when, during a calendar year, they contribute in excess of \$5,500 to state and/or local candidates. They must file reports with ELEC each quarter that list their contributions and expenditures.

For purposes of this analysis, special interest PACs are defined as those that identified themselves as a business, labor union, professional association, ideological group, civic association, trade association, or other ongoing committees. The list also includes PACs formed by employees of regulated industries such as banks and insurance companies, which cannot use corporate funds for campaign contributions.

This press release is a compilation of figures reported to the Commission, and is not intended to express any opinion concerning the accuracy or completeness of any filed report. Although the Commission has taken all reasonable precautions to prevent mathematical or typographical errors, they may occur.

Copies of PAC, lobbying and independent spending reports are available on ELEC's website at www.elec.state.nj.us.

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