



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:

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“Political party committees are overwhelmingly the dominant source of contributions to municipal and county candidates,” said Jeffrey M. Brindle, author of a New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) study on local campaign financing and ELEC’s deputy director.

According to Brindle, 76 percent of contributions to 50 randomly selected local candidates in the 1999 general election derived from political party organizations, mostly county and municipal.

The study, which analyzed the campaigns of municipal, freeholder, and county executive candidates, found that ten percent of contributions derived from business interests and nine percent from individuals. Negligible amounts were contributed by other entities such as PACs, political committees, and unions.

“The findings in this study, entitled Local Campaign Financing, corroborate the findings in an earlier commission study entitled Repartyization: The Rebirth of County Organizations, which indicated that county party committees had resurrected themselves in terms of their involvement in electoral politics,” said Brindle.

Brindle noted that the dominance of local party organizations in municipal and county campaigns is due “in part to the fact that many local candidates are newly recruited to run for public office and are dependent on local party organizations to undertake the every day tasks of running a campaign.”

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Located at: 28 W. State Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Trenton, New Jersey

The study suggested also that local candidates do not, in general, have the wide range of potential donors, as, for instance, legislative candidates do. According to the study, legislative candidates can attract contributors from PACs, corporations, unions, and lobbyists because they deal with a broader spectrum of issues than local candidates.

Brindle said that the study analyzed as well the spending patterns of local candidates. "Mass communication spending constituted 68 percent of all expenditures by municipal and county candidates," he said.

"Of the dollars spent on mass communication, 80 percent was directed toward print advertising, with the majority of those expenditures committed to direct mail," added Brindle.

"In comparison, "he said" legislative candidates, whose campaigns are more candidate-centered, expended only 36 percent of their funds on mass communication, with the bulk of these funds expended on direct mail and, increasingly, cable TV."

Local Campaign Financing, which is the 14<sup>th</sup> in a series of commission white papers analyzing campaign finance and lobbying issues in New Jersey, noted that all local candidates in the 1999 general election who filed detailed reports, raised \$18.2 million and spent \$17 million.

"Compared with ten years earlier when local candidates raised \$12.2 million and spent \$10.7 million," said Brindle "municipal and county candidates in 1999 had increased their fundraising over 1989 by 49 percent and their expenditures by 59 percent."

Brindle said that the rate of increase in financial activity by local candidates follows closely that of legislative candidates, who boosted their fundraising by 57 percent and expenditures by 60 percent during a similar period 1987-1997.

Copies of the study can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (609) 292-8700 or writing to New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, P.O. Box 185, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185, and can also be viewed and downloaded from the Commission's web site at [www.elec.state.nj.us](http://www.elec.state.nj.us).