New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission ELEC 1973

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FOR RELEASE:
November 16, 2009

PRESS ADVISORY

For the first time ever, members of the public, media members and candidates now can use the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission website (www.elec.state.nj.us) to search campaign donations received by municipal candidates.

Initially, more than $5.5 million donated to 377 different primary fundraising committees last spring can be analyzed electronically. More than $11.5 million in general election funding will become available early next year.

Jeff Brindle, Executive Director of the Commission, said providing access to the donations has been a "major priority" since he assumed his new position July 1st.

"Our primary mission at the Commission is to provide the fullest possible disclosure of candidate fundraising. This brings us one-step closer to fulfilling that mission,'' Brindle said.

The director also said more complete disclosure of municipal donations will help ensure the enforcement of Pay-to-Play laws. Those laws are intended to discourage undue influence by public contractors.

"While we have long provided public access to State and some county donations, this helps provide a 'missing link' that will allow even broader awareness of how candidates raise their money in New Jersey," Brindle said.

An analysis of the municipal database by Commission staff found that fundraising topped $200,000 in five places:

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Location	Receipts	Disbursements
Edison Township	$587,853	$590,837
East Orange	$408,725	$379,597
Atlantic City	$251,303	$248,142
Middlesex County	$234,216	$235,938
Bergen County	$228,245	$198,658

Fundraising topped $100,000 in 11 other locations:

Location	Receipts	Disbursements
Ocean County	$183,269	$188,602
Englewood	$177,963	$163,162
Morristown	$160,981	$152,362
Atlantic County	$157,042	$124,185
Camden County	$152,874	$142,567
Plainfield	$129,128	$148,998
Burlington County	$124,300	$124,300
Gloucester County	$117,032	$97,463
Passaic County	$114,354	$86,837
Brick Township	$110,593	$29,095
Secaucus	$107,889	$106,561

The Commission has long made available electronic facsimiles of municipal candidate reports. But until now, people could not sort through individual contributions.

Initially, the database includes donations received only during the primary. It includes funding provided to municipal candidates as well as individual county candidates such as freeholders and clerks.

Donations to county party committees have been available for several years. However, those made to municipal parties still not are available in searchable form. People can call up scanned facsimiles of municipal party committee reports on the ELEC website.

Along with general election donations, the database also does not include donations to school boards, donations made to May and June municipal runoffs and to fire commission candidates. Brindle said the Commission will be working to make this additional data available as soon as possible.

While the new data shows that $17 million was raised for municipal elections this year, local fundraising efforts could be even more intense next year when elections loom in several major cities, including Bayonne, Clifton, Irvington, Newark, Paterson, Perth Amboy, and Trenton.

Additional information about local fundraising is available by reviewing "Local Campaign Financing: An Analysis of Trends in Communities Large and Small," a report prepared by then-deputy director Brindle in December 2005 and available at (http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/whitepapers/white18.pdf).

In that 59-page "white paper" analysis, Brindle reviewed 50 communities and found that between 1994 and 2004, municipal candidates just in those communities had raised $162 million and spent $144 million. During the same period, general election fundraising grew 98 percent while spending shot up 120 percent.

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