



NEWS RELEASE

Respond to:
P.O. Box 185
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185

(609) 292-8700 or Toll Free Within NJ 1-888-313-ELEC (3532)

CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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With voters set to decide who fills 80 state Assembly seats this fall, the “Big Six” fundraising committees have built up a combined cash reserve of \$2.2 million, according to an analysis by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

The combined cash reserves of the Big Six are \$536,768, or 33 percent, more than the \$1.6 million reported in April. But the total continues to lag four previous election years dating back to 2007.

**TABLE 1
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY “BIG SIX”
AT END OF SECOND QUARTER BY YEAR**

BOTH PARTIES	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*	STATE ELECTIONS
2007	\$5,776,859	\$2,328,316	\$8,015,277	\$7,911,808	Senate and Assembly
2008	\$3,438,622	\$2,238,356	\$1,577,591	\$ 918,612	
2009	\$3,653,103	\$1,811,223	\$3,682,236	\$3,548,060	Governor and Assembly
2010	\$2,175,742	\$1,637,673	\$1,835,526	\$1,666,742	
2011	\$3,684,467	\$1,915,020	\$3,329,478	\$3,051,770	Senate and Assembly
2012	\$2,988,610	\$2,590,387	\$1,426,366	\$1,193,221	
2013	\$3,382,737	\$1,874,081	\$3,189,889	\$3,093,711	Governor and Both Houses
2014	\$1,276,109	\$1,319,714	\$ 800,994	\$ 287,246	
2015	\$2,476,599	\$1,983,389	\$2,160,318	\$1,624,601	Assembly

*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.

Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director, said one reason cash reserves and fundraising may be lower than in other recent election years is because, for the first time since 1999, only the state Assembly is facing reelection.

“The fact that state Assembly members are alone on the ballot this fall probably does account for some of the drop-off,” he said. “However, fundraising by the “Big Six” committees has been on a gradual decline for several years due to tight contribution limits on state contractors, fewer checks from wealthy donors, and the fact that many special interest groups now are spending their money independently of parties and candidates.”

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“Cash reserves at this point in 2007 were four times larger than this year. And the Big Six committees that year had raised more than twice as much money during the first six months of the year,” Brindle said. “Clearly, there is more going on than just the fact that the 40 state Senate seats are not in contention this fall.”

Brindle said several recommendations set forth by ELEC on a bipartisan basis may help reverse the downward trend.

These include combining the maze of so-called “pay-to-play” contribution restrictions into a single law, allowing public contractors to make larger contributions particularly to parties, adjusting other contribution limits higher for inflation, and making independent special interest groups follow the same disclosure laws as parties and candidates.

For the first six months of the year, the three Republican committees raised and spent more than the three Democratic committees and reported larger cash reserves, Brindle said.

TABLE 2
FUNDRAISING BY “BIG SIX” COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$ 563,188	\$ 788,177	\$ 328,560	(-\$ 111,665)
Senate Republican Majority	\$ 173,024	\$ 44,870	\$ 346,242	\$ 346,242
Assembly Republican Victory	\$ 581,308	\$ 240,918	\$ 563,220	\$ 557,910
Sub Total-Republicans	\$1,317,520	\$1,073,965	\$1,238,022	\$ 792,487
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$ 412,692	\$ 447,466	\$ 140,877	\$ 101,134
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 126,564	\$ 135,862	\$ 170,476	\$ 150,476
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$ 619,823	\$ 326,096	\$ 610,943	\$ 580,504
Sub Total-Democrats	\$1,159,079	\$ 909,424	\$ 922,296	\$ 832,114
Total-Both Parties	\$2,476,599	\$1,983,389	\$2,160,318	\$1,624,601

*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.

**Some spending totals exceed fundraising totals because cash reserves were used as well as recent contributions.

“However, among the two leadership committees that will be most active in this fall’s election, the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee so far has outdistanced the Assembly Republican Victory committee for the first six months,” he said. “The Republican committee did raise more money during the most recent quarter- \$439,860 versus \$308,763 for the Democratic committee.”

State Parties and Legislative Leadership Committees are required to report their financial activity to the Commission on a quarterly basis. The reports are available on ELEC’s website at www.elec.state.nj.us. ELEC also can be accessed on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/elecnj).