



NEWS RELEASE

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Eighty-six percent of the candidates who sought legislative seats in the June 6 primary filed personal financial disclosure reports (PFDs), the lowest percentage since 2011, according to an analysis by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Incumbents complied at a higher rate than challengers, the analysis shows. Of the 108 incumbents who participated in the primary election, 94 percent filed their disclosure forms. Among the 172 challengers, 80 percent submitted their forms. Compliance was down for both incumbents and challengers based on information from three previous election years.

Table 1
Percentage of Legislative Primary Candidates
Who Filed Personal Disclosure Forms with ELEC

GROUP	TOTAL CANDIDATES	FILERS	2017	2015	2013	2011
Incumbents	108	102	94%	100%	99%	97%
Challengers	172	138	80%	84%	90%	87%
Totals	280	240	86%	91%	94%	91%

“It is disappointing to see a slight decline in compliance. But our analysis shows that the overwhelming number of candidates still do comply with the law,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “The information candidates provide on their financial disclosure forms may not be as detailed as the information provided in their campaign finance reports. But the legislative intent is the same- to help inform voters.”

Republican and Democrat incumbents had the highest compliance rate- 100 and 92 percent, respectively. Compliance by Democratic incumbents was down versus the three previous elections.

At 75 percent, Republican challengers had the lowest compliance rate compared to past elections. Democratic challengers had their highest compliance rate- 89% - compared to those same elections.

Table 2
Compliance Rate by Party Affiliation

GROUP	2017	2015	2013	2011
Republicans-Incumbents	100%	100%	100%	95%
Democrats-Incumbents	92%	100%	99%	98%
Democrats-All	90%	90%	91%	91%
Democrats-Challengers	89%	79%	83%	83%
Candidates-All	86%	91%	94%	91%
Republicans-All	81%	92%	97%	92%
Republicans-Challengers	75%	87%	95%	90%

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New Jersey law requires candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the State Senate, and the Assembly to file the seven-page personal financial disclosure forms during the year of their candidacy.

The disclosure forms ask candidates to identify sources of earned income, such as salaries or bonuses, and unearned income, such as rents and dividends. Disclosure is required if the source of income exceeds \$1,000 in any one category. The statements list only sources of income, not dollar amounts. Candidates also report sources of income received by spouses and children of candidates.

Candidates also must disclose gifts valued at more than \$250, and whether they own any property in a city where casino gambling is authorized.

Among candidates who filed their forms, most- 77 percent- checked the candidate salary category. Salary-spouse was the second most frequently checked box- 47 percent. Properties in cities with casinos and royalties were reported the least at 1 percent each.

Table 3
Categories Checked Most Often by Candidates

CATEGORY	NUMBER	FREQUENCY
Salary-Candidate	215	77%
Salary- Spouse	132	47%
Other	92	33%
Dividends	74	26%
Rent	61	22%
Reimbursement	47	17%
Bonus	41	15%
Fees	27	10%
Commissions	26	9%
Profit	25	9%
Salary-Children	22	8%
Gifts	13	5%
Honorariums	6	2%
Royalties	4	1%
Own Property In City With Casinos	2	1%

Copies of personal financial disclosure forms can be viewed by going to the “View a Candidate or Election Related Committee Report” search page (<http://www.elec.state.nj.us/ELECRReport/SearchCandidate.aspx>) and entering the candidate’s name. Look for form PFD-1.

The bipartisan Commission has urged the Legislature to move to May 15 the deadline for the filing of personal financial disclosure reports. Currently, candidates are supposed to file these forms within 10 days after they file their nomination petitions, which causes difficulties both for the candidates and ELEC.

May 15 is the same date that incumbent legislators must file separate disclosure forms with the Office of Legislative Services. “By using the same deadline for both reports, the filing process will be more orderly while still providing disclosure well before the election,” said Brindle.