



NEWS RELEASE

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MONEY TRICKLES INTO “BIG SIX” COFFERS AS PARTIES GEAR UP FOR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The so-called “Big Six” fund-raising committees raised less than \$1 million during the first three months of 2019, the smallest haul in at least a decade for a state election year.

Quarterly reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) show that the two major state parties and four legislative leadership committees raised \$981,798 during the first quarter. While the first quarter total of 2015, another Assembly-only election year, was slightly smaller, it is worth more than \$1 million when adjusted for inflation.

Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director, said while it still is early in the year, the latest quarterly totals are another warning sign for the state’s political parties.

“Their continuing fund-raising woes are more reason the Legislature should consider approving ELEC recommendations to try to reverse this trend. ELEC’s suggested reforms include raising general contribution limits for party and candidate committees, and easing tight pay-to-play contribution restrictions from parties and instead imposing them on political action committees,” he said.

Brindle also said he is hopeful Governor Phil Murphy will sign ELEC-backed legislation (S-1500/A-1524) that won overwhelming, bipartisan approval from the Legislature in March. The bill would require independent special interest spenders to finally abide by the same disclosure rules as parties, candidates and traditional PACs.

“Parties are an essential part of our political system. Steps need to be taken to prevent them from being rendered irrelevant by the growing clout of these independent spenders,” Brindle said. “S-1500/A-1524 is a step toward aligning disclosure requirements of independent groups with those of parties and candidates.”

One bright spot in the quarterly reports is that combined cash-on-hand was nearly \$1.9 million, or 15 percent, above the 2015 total when just lower house seats were in contention. On the negative side, it was below first quarter cash reserves for four other state election years since 2009.

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

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH	STATE ELECTIONS
2009	\$1,741,580	\$ 754,923	\$2,844,159	\$2,649,177	Governor and Assembly
2010	\$ 885,123	\$ 694,309	\$1,474,272	\$1,290,437	
2011	\$1,738,239	\$ 777,847	\$2,500,926	\$2,191,738	Senate and Assembly
2012	\$1,293,649	\$1,617,192	\$ 704,601	\$ 503,541	
2013	\$1,464,033	\$ 583,756	\$2,564,802	\$2,421,411	Governor and Both Houses
2014	\$ 600,526	\$ 694,221	\$ 750,904	\$ 443,050	
2015	\$ 973,494	\$1,017,051	\$1,623,550	\$ 994,137	Assembly
2016	\$ 673,048	\$ 555,175	\$1,097,091	\$ 415,590	
2017	\$1,076,186	\$ 544,948	\$2,198,343	\$2,064,647	Governor and Both Houses
2018	\$1,902,503	\$1,832,307	\$ 814,754	\$ 730,251	
2019	\$ 981,798	\$ 634,650	\$1,868,717	\$1,728,640	Assembly

Democratic committees had more fund-raising success during the first quarter and spent more than Republicans. They also had more cash in the bank.

TABLE 2
FUNDRAISING BY “BIG SIX” COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2019

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$213,905	\$105,505	\$ 226,203	\$ 226,203
Senate Republican Majority	\$112,250	\$ 56,959	\$ 227,541	\$ 227,541
Assembly Republican Victory	\$123,673	\$ 41,769	\$ 268,935	\$ 245,017
Sub-Total- Republicans	\$449,828	\$204,233	\$ 722,679	\$ 698,761
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$244,466	\$186,258	\$ 160,890	\$ 95,169
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 56,404	\$ 74,235	\$ 288,150	\$ 268,150
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$231,100	\$169,924	\$ 696,998	\$ 666,560
Sub-Total- Democrats	\$531,970	\$430,417	\$1,146,038	\$1,029,879
Total- Both Parties	\$981,798	\$634,650	\$1,868,717	\$1,728,640

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

**Some spending totals exceed fundraising totals because the committee dipped into reserves or incurred debt.

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/elecny).