



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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COUNTY PARTIES HEAD INTO 2019 ELECTION YEAR WITH PLUMPEST COFFERS IN A DECADE

County political party committees are headed into a statewide election year with \$3.3 million in combined cash reserves, their biggest stash in more than a decade, according to quarterly reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said the combined cash reserve reported for March 31, 2019 is nearly 60 percent higher than the figure reported two years ago.

"Combined county party cash reserves have jumped 60 percent from \$2.1 million two years ago. This is despite the cost of gubernatorial and legislative elections (2017) and a federal election (2018) along with local elections both years," he said. The 80 seats in the state assembly and local offices are up for grabs this year.

Table 1
First Quarter Cash-on-Hand Totals
for County Political Parties 2009-2019

YEAR	CASH-ON-HAND	YEAR	CASH-ON-HAND
2009	\$1,855,920	2015	\$1,437,520
2010	\$2,078,378	2016	\$2,027,203
2011	\$1,141,821	2017	\$2,086,933
2012	\$1,023,935	2018	\$2,657,429
2013	\$1,457,253	2019	\$3,341,448
2014	\$1,312,788		

The last time counties had more buying power after the first quarter was in 2003, when reserves were worth \$3.6 million on an inflation-adjusted basis.

Brindle said both parties are still benefiting from a large infusion of funds during the two big election years during which they received hefty checks from wealthy self-funded candidates, checks from gubernatorial and congressional candidates, and money from national unions and other donors.

"The windfall has boosted the "bottom line" of county parties, at least in the short-term," said Brindle.

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Both parties reported their largest cash reserves since 2009. Democrats had \$2.3 million in the bank on March 31, 2019 while Republicans have saved more than \$1 million.

**Table 2
First Quarter Cash-on-Hand Totals for Democratic
and Republican County Political Parties 2009-2019**

YEAR	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	TOTAL
2009	\$1,453,657	\$ 402,623	\$1,855,920
2010	\$1,806,504	\$ 271,874	\$2,078,378
2011	\$ 790,265	\$ 351,556	\$1,141,821
2012	\$ 708,074	\$ 315,861	\$1,023,935
2013	\$1,194,185	\$ 263,068	\$1,457,253
2014	\$ 838,605	\$ 474,184	\$1,312,788
2015	\$ 916,544	\$ 520,976	\$1,437,520
2016	\$1,245,021	\$ 782,181	\$2,027,203
2017	\$1,465,078	\$ 621,855	\$2,086,933
2018	\$2,107,613	\$ 549,815	\$2,657,429
2019	\$2,297,905	\$1,043,544	\$3,341,448

Reports filed by county parties also showed they raised \$1.6 million during the first three months of 2019. That is the best first quarter fund-raising total since 2007.

**Table 3
First Quarter Fund-raising Totals
for County Political Parties 2007-2019**

YEAR	RAISED	YEAR	RAISED
2007	\$2,193,314	2014	\$1,048,455
2008	\$1,096,676	2015	\$1,080,157
2009	\$1,338,922	2016	\$1,499,334
2010	\$1,023,791	2017	\$1,195,248
2011	\$1,088,038	2018	\$1,371,138
2012	\$ 891,658	2019	\$1,648,413
2013	\$ 957,098		

Brindle said while it is heartening to see improvement in county party finances, he is concerned the effect will be temporary. He noted that the current quarter’s fundraising figure still is 43 percent below the 2003 total of \$2.9 million.

“I remain firmly convinced that the Legislature needs to adopt ELEC recommendations that would provide a direct boost to party fund-raising,” he said. “In an era where independent special interest groups are becoming huge competitors to parties, fundamental reforms remain necessary.”

These changes include requiring independent groups to fully disclose their campaign finance activity just like parties and candidates, raising the amount parties can raise from all contributors, exempting parties from stringent pay-to-play contribution limits, and applying pay-to-play limits instead to continuing political committees (PACs).

All first quarter totals for both parties are higher when compared to the first quarter of 2015.

Table 4
Fundraising by County Party Committees
January 1 Through March 31

2019	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$ 889,350	\$ 996,409	\$2,297,905	\$2,137,717
Republican County Party Committees	\$ 759,063	\$ 657,993	\$1,043,544	\$1,862,190
Total- Both Parties	\$1,648,413	\$1,654,402	\$3,341,448	\$3,999,907
2015	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH
Democratic County Party Committees	\$ 619,216	\$ 680,649	\$ 916,544	\$ 653,867
Republican County Party Committees	\$ 460,941	\$ 438,164	\$ 520,976	\$1,387,180
Total- Both Parties	\$1,080,157	\$1,118,813	\$1,437,520	\$2,041,047
Difference 2019 versus 2015	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH
Democratic County Party Committees	44%	46%	151%	227%
Republican County Party Committees	65%	50%	100%	34%
Total- Both Parties	53%	48%	132%	96%

*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 reserve or incurred debt.

Six Democratic county party committees - Camden, Gloucester, Mercer, Passaic, Salem and Union- reported a cash reserve above \$100,000. Middlesex reported a cash deficit, and Hudson and Middlesex reported a negative net worth.

Table 5
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through March 31, 2019

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 22,297	\$ 15,136	\$ 13,669	\$ 13,669
Bergen	\$154,356	\$130,647	\$ 63,686	\$ 44,055
Burlington	\$ 23,536	\$ 62,037	\$ 43,037	\$ 25,459
Camden	\$118,992	\$137,327	\$ 593,488	\$ 593,488
Cape May**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cumberland	\$ 5,250	\$ 14,616	\$ 2,272	\$ 2,272
Essex	\$ 56,900	\$ 85,970	\$ 79,050	\$ 79,050
Gloucester	\$ 2,074	\$ 46,288	\$ 373,563	\$ 373,563
Hudson	\$ 4,501	\$ 60,980	\$ 20,179	\$ (118,966)
Hunterdon	\$ 11,617	\$ 6,057	\$ 21,105	\$ 21,105
Mercer	\$ 0	\$ 16,116	\$ 142,009	\$ 142,009
Middlesex	\$180,941	\$197,738	\$ (1,441)	\$ (1,441)
Monmouth	\$ 75,083	\$ 31,450	\$ 48,100	\$ 48,100
Morris	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ocean	\$ 25,431	\$ 13,089	\$ 55,332	\$ 71,499
Passaic	\$ 91,009	\$ 64,212	\$ 413,745	\$ 413,745
Salem	\$ 2,917	\$ 2,162	\$ 105,425	\$ 105,425
Somerset	\$ 27,943	\$ 31,629	\$ 34,934	\$ 34,934
Sussex	\$ 2,293	\$ 4,045	\$ 18,481	\$ 18,481
Union	\$ 84,211	\$ 76,910	\$ 271,271	\$ 271,271
Warren	NA	NA	NA	NA
Democrats-Total	\$889,350	\$996,409	\$2,297,905	\$2,137,717

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

**Does not expect to spend more than \$6,300 for the year.

NA= Not Available

Among Republican county party committees that have filed their reports, Salem and Somerset Counties reported a cash reserve larger than \$100,000. Burlington, Salem and Somerset Counties reported net worth totals above \$100,000.

Table 6
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through March 31, 2019

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 6,851	\$ 5,702	\$ 41,491	\$ 41,491
Bergen	\$ 34,495	\$ 23,544	\$ 20,935	\$ 20,935
Burlington	\$ 57,500	\$ 75,924	\$ 35,050	\$ 852,417
Camden	\$ 4,700	\$ 3,980	\$ 19,189	\$ 19,189
Cape May	\$ 80,079	\$ 26,212	\$ 88,030	\$ 88,030
Cumberland	\$ 12,283	\$ 17,726	\$ 43,418	\$ 43,418
Essex	\$ 0	\$ 475	\$ 19,032	\$ 19,032
Gloucester	\$ 56,721	\$ 35,752	\$ 29,306	\$ 29,306
Hudson	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 37,370	\$ 22,108	\$ 28,652	\$ 28,652
Mercer	\$ 4,775	\$ 4,773	\$ 28,353	\$ 28,353
Middlesex	\$ 1,540	\$ 5,538	\$ 39,277	\$ 39,277
Monmouth	\$ 12,564	\$ 32,971	\$ 7,669	\$ 7,669
Morris	\$ 11,012	\$ 14,846	\$ 12,184	\$ 13,463
Ocean	\$ 49,000	\$ 33,598	\$ 35,312	\$ 35,312
Passaic	\$ 44,317	\$ 38,929	\$ 23,878	\$ 23,878
Salem	\$221,385	\$217,828	\$ 269,874	\$ 269,874
Somerset	\$ 72,512	\$ 55,970	\$ 173,658	\$ 173,658
Sussex	\$ 16,951	\$ 11,493	\$ 40,652	\$ 40,652
Union	\$ 27,843	\$ 17,408	\$ 71,328	\$ 71,328
Warren	\$ 7,165	\$ 13,216	\$ 16,255	\$ 16,255
Republicans-Total	\$759,063	\$657,993	\$1,043,544	\$1,862,190

*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.
 NA=Not available.

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon May 6, 2019. They have yet to be verified by ELEC staff, and should be considered preliminary.

Individual reports can be reviewed on ELEC's website (www.elec.state.nj.us).