



NEWS RELEASE

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

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CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:
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COUNTY PARTY COFFERS FLUSH AS FALL ELECTIONS APPROACH

County political parties are heading toward the fall campaigns with nearly twice the cash they had in 2015, the last election year with just the state Assembly¹ on the ballot, according to quarterly reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

County party committees as a group indicate they have raised \$3.2 million, spent \$3.3 million and have \$3.3 million in cash reserves at the end of the first six months of 2019.

Even while spending 39 percent more than they did four years ago, county parties have managed to salt away 91 percent more. Cash-on-hand is measure of the financial firepower available for looming elections.

“County parties are in better shape this year than they were during the 2015 Assembly elections. In fact, the combined cash-on-hand total is 17 percent more than in 2017², when there was a gubernatorial campaign and both legislative houses up for reelection,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director.

Table 1
Fundraising by County Party Committees
January 1 Through June 30

2019	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$1,951,466	\$2,174,776	\$2,174,937	\$2,014,743
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,229,525	\$1,116,458	\$1,076,210	\$1,464,272
Total- Both Parties	\$3,180,991	\$3,291,234	\$3,251,147	\$3,479,015
2015	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH
Democratic County Party Committees	\$1,415,710	\$1,442,714	\$ 934,320	\$ 745,908
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,182,008	\$ 922,774	\$ 772,145	\$1,564,030
Total- Both Parties	\$2,597,718	\$2,365,487	\$1,706,465	\$2,309,939
Difference 2019 versus 2015	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH
Democratic County Party Committees	38%	51%	133%	170%
Republican County Party Committees	4%	21%	39%	-6%
Total- Both Parties	22%	39%	91%	51%

*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.

¹ There is one special election for the state Senate seat in the 1st legislative district.

² 2017 cash-on-hand total was \$2,768,884

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Brindle said while both parties are reporting higher totals than in 2015, Democratic totals have risen more. For instance, Democratic cash-on-hand is up 133 percent compared to 2015, while Republican cash-on-hand has increased 39 percent.

Not since 2003, when the combined cash-on-hand had the buying power of \$3.6 million when adjusted for inflation, has the county party “cash stash” been this large.

Table 2
Campaign Finance Activity by County Party Committees
January 1 Through June 30 (Election Years Only)

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATE ELECTION*
2003	\$7,932,857	\$6,749,299	\$2,638,558	S/A
2005	\$4,596,354	\$4,995,807	\$1,808,987	G/A
2007	\$5,049,224	\$4,840,451	\$1,966,554	S/A
2009	\$2,829,837	\$3,044,906	\$1,713,660	G/A
2011	\$2,617,165	\$2,374,567	\$1,444,408	S/A
2013	\$2,647,728	\$2,560,856	\$1,627,287	G/S/A
2015	\$2,597,718	\$2,365,487	\$1,706,465	A
2017	\$3,585,017	\$3,060,539	\$2,768,884	G/S/A
2019	\$3,180,991	\$3,291,234	\$3,251,147	A

“You can’t ignore the fact that county parties have done a better job recently of stockpiling their cash. On the other hand, fundraising and spending totals remain well below previous historic highs,” said Brindle.

“State and county parties all have struggled to raise campaign cash for over a decade because special interest groups have become inclined to spend independently instead of handing more checks to parties and candidates. Parties also continue to feel the pinch of tight caps on public contractor contributions that began in the mid-2000s.”

Brindle said ELEC has proposed bi-partisan recommendations to try to strengthen the financial health of parties, including letting them raise more money from donors and imposing pay-to-play contribution restrictions on independent groups instead of parties.

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

Table 3
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through June 30, 2019

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 62,039	\$ 56,957	\$ 11,590	\$ 11,590
Bergen	\$ 158,356	\$ 186,673	\$ 11,661	\$ (7,977)
Burlington	\$ 91,421	\$ 129,399	\$ 43,560	\$ 25,981
Camden	\$ 193,499	\$ 332,358	\$ 472,964	\$ 472,964
Cape May	\$ 7,841	\$ 8,438	\$ 362	\$ 362
Cumberland	\$ 14,416	\$ 6,048	\$ 5,390	\$ 5,390
Essex	\$ 205,783	\$ 186,881	\$ 127,022	\$ 127,022
Gloucester	\$ 41,624	\$ 85,801	\$ 373,600	\$ 373,600
Hudson	\$ 102,451	\$ 153,815	\$ 25,294	\$ (113,851)
Hunterdon	\$ 21,630	\$ 13,430	\$ 23,744	\$ 23,744
Mercer	\$ 40,900	\$ 42,146	\$ 156,879	\$ 156,879
Middlesex	\$ 344,594	\$ 355,048	\$ 4,903	\$ 4,903
Monmouth	\$ 118,296	\$ 83,699	\$ 39,065	\$ 39,065
Morris**	\$ 85,336	\$ 51,935	\$ 40,341	\$ 40,341
Ocean	\$ 29,237	\$ 27,322	\$ 44,905	\$ 61,072
Passaic	\$ 158,684	\$ 97,100	\$ 448,532	\$ 448,532
Salem	\$ 7,892	\$ 10,555	\$ 102,007	\$ 102,007
Somerset	\$ 53,392	\$ 58,385	\$ 33,627	\$ 33,627
Sussex	\$ 6,443	\$ 11,150	\$ 15,526	\$ 15,526
Union	\$ 207,633	\$ 277,638	\$ 193,965	\$ 193,965
Warren	NA	NA	NA	NA
Democrats-Total	\$1,951,466	\$2,174,776	\$2,174,937	\$2,014,743

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

NA= Not Available

** First Quarter Totals

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 4
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through June 30, 2019

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 21,402	\$ 18,740	\$ 43,004	\$ 43,004
Bergen	\$ 56,641	\$ 56,372	\$ 10,253	\$ 4,324
Burlington	\$ 187,640	\$ 180,856	\$ 60,258	\$ 452,969
Camden	\$ 5,755	\$ 11,257	\$ 12,967	\$ 12,967
Cape May**	\$ 80,079	\$ 26,212	\$ 88,030	\$ 88,030
Cumberland	\$ 15,348	\$ 25,799	\$ 38,410	\$ 38,410
Essex	-	\$ 775	\$ 18,732	\$ 18,732
Gloucester	\$ 25,529	\$ 23,698	\$ 31,137	\$ 31,137
Hudson	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 48,732	\$ 53,814	\$ 8,309	\$ 8,309
Mercer	\$ 4,950	\$ 4,512	\$ 28,489	\$ 28,489
Middlesex	\$ 3,060	\$ 7,661	\$ 38,673	\$ 38,673
Monmouth	\$ 103,357	\$ 76,654	\$ 54,779	\$ 54,779
Morris**	\$ 11,012	\$ 14,846	\$ 12,184	\$ 13,463
Ocean	\$ 70,500	\$ 84,160	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250
Passaic	\$ 147,030	\$ 101,562	\$ 63,958	\$ 63,958
Salem**	\$ 221,385	\$ 217,828	\$ 269,874	\$ 269,874
Somerset	\$ 150,708	\$ 132,541	\$ 175,282	\$ 175,282
Sussex	\$ 31,294	\$ 32,003	\$ 34,485	\$ 34,485
Union	\$ 35,087	\$ 25,739	\$ 70,242	\$ 70,242
Warren	\$ 10,015	\$ 21,429	\$ 10,893	\$ 10,893
Republicans-Total	\$1,229,525	\$1,116,458	\$1,076,210	\$1,464,272

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

NA=Not available.

**First Quarter Totals

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon July 30, 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).

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