



NEWS RELEASE

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Low-Key Legislative Election Brings Low Spending by Big Six

Fund-raising and spending in the 2019 state election by the so-called Big Six committees were the lowest in more than a decade, according disclosure reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

As a group, the committees - the two state parties and four legislative leadership committees- raised \$7.2 million, spent \$8 million and reported \$660,067 in leftover funds. Fund-raising and spending were higher in the six previous state election years dating back to 2007.

“With just the state Assembly running for reelection plus a special state Senate election in the first legislative district, it was a relatively low-profile election,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “That may be one reason why Big Six spending was fairly subdued for a state election year.”

Brindle noted that if the nearly \$8.7 million in spending in the 2015 legislative race had been increased just to offset inflation, the Big Six would have spent \$9.3 million in 2019. Instead, spending fell to \$8 million.

Table 1
Campaign Finance Activity in State Election Years
by “Big Six” January 1 through December 31, 2019

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT*	CASH-ON-HAND	ELECTION TYPE
2007	\$19,177,655	\$23,367,064	\$ 377,324	S/A
2009	\$12,368,082	\$12,919,862	\$1,297,457	G/A
2011	\$15,035,468	\$15,547,359	\$1,028,142	S/A
2013	\$13,885,028	\$14,727,957	\$ 841,599	G/S/A
2015	\$ 8,027,793	\$ 8,661,126	\$ 979,220	A
2017	\$12,243,328	\$13,348,131	\$ 738,454	G/S/A
2019	\$ 7,155,435	\$ 8,016,939	\$ 660,067	A**

S= State Senate; G=Gubernatorial; A=Assembly

*Spending may exceed fundraising because committee tapped reserve funds.

**Also, special state Senate election in 1st legislative district.

He said ELEC-recommended legislative initiatives that have bipartisan backing could boost party committees.

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“The long-term financial decline of party committees must be reversed because they are more accountable and transparent than the fast-spreading array of independent special interest committees that now dominate the electoral landscape in New Jersey,” Brindle said. “Higher contribution limits for party committees, an exemption from pay-to-play restrictions, and a requirement that independent spenders fully disclose their donors just like parties and candidates would help reinvigorate the parties.”

Democrats, who still retain a majority in both legislative houses, lost the one Senate seat in contention and two assembly seats. All three are in the first legislative district. Democrats now hold a 25-15 edge in the Senate and a 52-28 majority in the Assembly. Democrats have controlled the legislature since January 2002.

Democratic committees raised and spent more than Republican committees and had more leftover funds.

Compared to four years ago, when the Assembly also was alone on the ballot, fund-raising, spending and cash-on-hand was down for both parties though net worth figures are higher.

Table 2
Campaign Finance Activity by
“Big Six” Committees in 2019

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$1,977,714	\$1,959,996	\$ 135,520	\$135,520
Senate Republican Majority	\$ 457,592	\$ 601,019	\$ 28,824	\$ 28,824
Assembly Republican Victory	\$ 715,434	\$ 861,683	\$ 40,783	\$ 40,783
Sub Total – Republicans - 2019	\$3,150,740	\$3,422,698	\$ 205,127	\$205,127
Versus 2015 (Dollars)	\$ (175,943)	\$ (248,657)	\$(435,848)	\$101,750
Versus 2015 (Percent)	-5%	-7%	-68%	98%
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$1,367,380	\$1,436,043	\$ 34,019	\$ 4,600
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 600,809	\$ 517,216	\$ 389,574	\$369,574
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$2,036,506	\$2,640,982	\$ 31,347	\$ 908
Sub Total – Democrats - 2019	\$4,004,695	\$4,594,241	\$ 454,940	\$375,082
Versus 2015 (Dollars)	\$(696,415)	\$(395,530)	\$ 116,695	\$216,106
Versus 2015 (Percent)	-15%	-8%	35%	136%
Both Parties				
Total - 2019	\$7,155,435	\$8,016,939	\$ 660,067	\$580,209
Versus 2015 (Dollars)	\$ (872,358)	\$ (644,187)	\$(319,153)	\$317,856
Versus 2015 (Percent)	-11%	-7%	-33%	121%

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

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