



NEWS RELEASE

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

(609) 292-8700 or Toll Free Within NJ 1-888-313-ELEC (3532)

CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:
December 3, 2020

County Party Fund-Raising on Rebound as COVID-19 Crisis Persists

County political party committees raised almost as much money during the third quarter as they did during the previous six months, according to the latest reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

Year-to-date fund-raising through September 30 reached \$3.8 million. It is the lowest total through the third quarter since 2009 except for 2012. Even the 2012 amount was worth more when adjusted for inflation.

Reports for the third quarter do show some improvement in fund-raising, however. During July, August and September, county parties raised \$1.8 million. The amount is nearly as much as the \$1.9 million collected during the six months from January through June.

Table 1
County Party Fundraising and Spending
through Third Quarter 2009-2020

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATE OR FEDERAL ELECTION YEAR
2009	\$7,398,692	\$6,375,763	\$2,952,853	State
2010	\$4,526,290	\$4,393,487	\$2,365,419	Federal
2011	\$4,798,299	\$3,694,423	\$2,134,219	State
2012	\$3,662,456	\$3,189,326	\$1,573,648	Federal
2013	\$5,319,655	\$4,447,403	\$2,456,395	State
2014	\$4,410,348	\$3,764,798	\$1,980,600	Federal
2015	\$4,843,498	\$4,176,856	\$2,123,801	State
2016	\$4,199,012	\$3,625,063	\$2,328,583	Federal
2017	\$6,661,677	\$5,527,347	\$3,266,399	State
2018	\$5,769,747	\$4,793,929	\$3,571,919	Federal
2019	\$4,890,874	\$5,073,468	\$2,958,486	State
2020	\$3,792,203	\$3,723,794	\$2,399,612	Federal

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said party officials appear to be adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic just like society at large.

"We can't totally stop all daily activities, but we do have to do some things more carefully," he said.

--more--

When the public health crisis first struck in March, many political fund-raising events were cancelled or postponed. Invitations to more recent events emphasize they are being held outdoors and include social distancing and mask-wearing, according to GovNetNJ.com.

Brindle noted that county party officials faced fund-raising challenges even before the pandemic’s eruption. Imposition of tighter contribution limits for public contractors, competition from independent spending committees and other factors already have shrunk their coffers during the past two decades.

“Bipartisan ELEC legislative recommendations to boost party fund-raising have never been more relevant,” he said. “The legislative changes may strengthen the finances of state and municipal parties as well.”

Steps that could help bolster party fund-raising include ending the complexity of pay-to-play laws by creating one state law, raising the contribution limit for public contractors from \$300 to \$1,000, and boosting contribution limits for county parties and other parties and candidates.

“Except for gubernatorial candidates, party and candidate contribution limits have not been raised since 2005 even though inflation has risen 33 percent since that time,” Brindle said.

Compared to four years ago, fund-raising, spending, cash-on-hand and net worth all are up for Democrats while all categories are down for Republicans versus 2016.

Table 2
Summary of Campaign Finance Activity by County Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2020 Versus 2016

2020	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$2,553,564	\$2,570,810	\$1,931,571	\$1,941,363
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,196,995	\$1,152,984	\$ 468,041	\$ 929,903
Total-Both Parties	\$3,750,559	\$3,723,794	\$2,399,612	\$2,871,266
2016	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$2,326,378	\$2,067,022	\$1,478,313	\$1,264,784
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,872,634	\$1,558,041	\$ 850,270	\$1,519,354
Total-Both Parties	\$4,199,012	\$3,625,063	\$2,328,583	\$2,784,138
Difference 2020 versus 2016	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	9.8%	24.4%	30.7%	53.5%
Republican County Party Committees	-36.1%	-26.0%	-45.0%	-38.8%
Total-Both Parties	-10.7%	2.7%	3.1%	3.1%

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

Among Democratic county committees that have filed their quarterly reports, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Mercer, Passaic, Salem and Union reported cash balances above \$100,000.

Morris County reported a negative cash balance.

Table 3
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2020

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 101,092	\$ 99,501	\$ 10,925	\$ 10,925
Bergen	\$ 342,080	\$ 226,605	\$ 148,609	\$ 148,609
Burlington	\$ 156,950	\$ 39,261	\$ 123,341	\$ 116,966
Camden	\$ 495,726	\$ 637,237	\$ 200,287	\$ 200,287
Cape May	\$ 52,059	\$ 45,961	\$ 6,312	\$ 6,312
Cumberland	\$ 61,276	\$ 61,944	\$ 3,733	\$ 3,733
Essex**	\$ 134,743	\$ 142,816	\$ 78,267	\$ 78,267
Gloucester	\$ 105,910	\$ 175,312	\$ 479,679	\$ 479,679
Hudson	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 40,080	\$ 27,455	\$ 31,695	\$ 31,695
Mercer	\$ 58,650	\$ 39,951	\$ 216,066	\$ 216,066
Middlesex	\$ 256,699	\$ 238,044	\$ 65,062	\$ 65,062
Monmouth	\$ 109,176	\$ 93,490	\$ 15,880	\$ 15,880
Morris	\$ 188,680	\$ 198,910	\$ (8,009)	\$ (8,009)
Ocean	\$ 23,062	\$ 32,940	\$ 13,451	\$ 29,617
Passaic	\$ 139,133	\$ 183,850	\$ 241,881	\$ 241,881
Salem	\$ 12,100	\$ 13,235	\$ 100,895	\$ 100,895
Somerset	\$ 57,741	\$ 86,988	\$ 30,395	\$ 30,395
Sussex	\$ 13,291	\$ 9,408	\$ 13,329	\$ 13,329
Union	\$ 200,064	\$ 212,135	\$ 141,308	\$ 141,308
Warren	\$ 5,052	\$ 5,768	\$ 18,466	\$ 18,466
Democrats-Total	\$2,553,564	\$2,570,810	\$1,931,571	\$1,941,363

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

**2nd quarter totals

NA-not available

No Republican county committees filing reports reported a cash balance above \$100,000.

Table 4
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2020

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 3,467	\$ 19,820	\$ 4,980	\$ 4,980
Bergen	\$ 101,583	\$ 95,660	\$ 24,648	\$ 14,648
Burlington	\$ 133,472	\$ 147,515	\$ 11,312	\$499,274
Camden	\$ 23,888	\$ 20,198	\$ 11,693	\$ 11,693
Cape May	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cumberland	\$ 51,231	\$ 24,416	\$ 33,441	\$ 33,441
Essex	\$ 18,500	\$ 11,129	\$ 29,325	\$ 29,325
Gloucester	\$ 87,958	\$ 88,328	\$ 21,348	\$ 21,348
Hudson**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 62,490	\$ 57,502	\$ 8,638	\$ 8,638
Mercer	\$ 2,025	\$ 7,731	\$ 179	\$ 179
Middlesex	\$ 2,800	\$ 2,787	\$ 16,400	\$ 16,400
Monmouth	\$ 275,246	\$ 229,205	\$ 86,019	\$ 81,519
Morris	\$ 71,361	\$ 52,313	\$ 29,259	\$ 17,659
Ocean	\$ 99,843	\$ 84,102	\$ 32,409	\$ 32,409
Passaic	\$ 135,395	\$ 157,658	\$ 35,227	\$ 35,227
Salem	\$ 13,631	\$ 6,077	\$ 40,316	\$ 40,316
Somerset	\$ 33,130	\$ 64,577	\$ 19,377	\$ 19,377
Sussex	\$ 9,585	\$ 16,769	\$ 9,060	\$ 9,060
Union	\$ 46,265	\$ 39,111	\$ 51,359	\$ 51,359
Warren	\$ 25,125	\$ 28,088	\$ 3,051	\$ 3,051
Republicans-Total	\$1,196,995	\$1,152,984	\$468,041	\$929,903

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

** Does not expect to spend more than \$6,300 in 2020.

NA-not available

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by 5 pm December 1, 2020. 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).

###