



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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County Party Fund-Raising Dips in Non-State Election Year

County political party committees in 2020 reported their second smallest fund-raising haul in a dozen years, collecting just \$6.9 million, according to the latest reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

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

YEAR*	RAISED	SPENT	STATE/FEDERAL?	OFFICE
2009	\$13,854,662	\$13,306,296	State	G/A
2010	\$ 7,591,065	\$ 8,712,802	Federal	H
2011	\$ 8,449,211	\$ 8,545,440	State	S/A
2012**	\$ 6,407,139	\$ 5,885,971	Federal	P/S/H
2013	\$ 9,908,851	\$10,069,188	State	G/S/A
2014	\$ 7,633,924	\$ 7,560,342	Federal	S/H
2015	\$ 9,161,877	\$ 8,883,225	State	A
2016	\$ 8,389,170	\$ 8,055,559	Federal	P/H
2017	\$14,564,574	\$14,114,921	State	G/S/A
2018	\$ 9,709,931	\$ 9,018,198	Federal	S/H
2019	\$ 8,191,320	\$ 8,821,224	State	A
2020	\$ 6,876,961	\$ 6,246,655	Federal	P/S/H

*State election years in boldface type P=Presidential; S=US or State Senate; H=House; G=Gubernatorial; A=Assembly

**Fund raised equals \$7,222,480 adjusted for inflation

Since 2009, the \$6.4 million raised in 2012 was the only lower total. Even that amount was worth more-\$7.2 million- adjusting for inflation.

One reason fund-raising dropped was because several county party fund-raising events were cancelled or delayed after the COVID-19 pandemic first slammed New Jersey last March. However, fund-raising picked up during the latter half of the year as officials adjusted.

“I’m sure party leaders knew they had to start picking things up since this year’s election features a race for governor, all 120 legislative seats and multiple county posts,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director.

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“We all were knocked off balance when the pandemic first swept the state. It is a testament to the resiliency of party officials that they have been able to bounce back somewhat,” he said.

While fund-raising was tepid in 2020, it could have been worse.

Since 2001, counties overall have raised 25 percent less during federal election years such as 2020. Last year, the total was off just 16 percent from 2019, when the last state election was held.

Both parties are raising less money and spending less than four years ago. Democratic declines were much smaller, however, leaving the majority party with a significant advantage over Republicans in cash reserves. Democrats have controlled the governor’s seat since January 2018 and have held majorities in both legislative houses since January 2002.

Compared to 2016, Democratic cash-on-hand is 62 percent higher at \$2.6 million. Republican cash-on-hand is down 25 percent to \$443,496.

Table 2
Summary of Campaign Finance
Activity by County Committees
2020 Versus 2016

2020	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$4,904,177	\$4,261,651	\$2,626,349	\$2,497,366
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,972,784	\$1,985,003	\$ 443,496	\$ 979,873
Total-Both Parties	\$6,876,961	\$6,246,655	\$3,069,844	\$3,477,240
2016	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$5,258,882	\$4,747,704	\$1,622,023	\$1,338,892
Republican County Party Committees	\$3,130,288	\$3,307,855	\$ 595,685	\$1,404,152
Total-Both Parties	\$8,389,170	\$8,055,559	\$2,217,708	\$2,743,044
Difference 2020 versus 2016	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democratic County Party Committees	-6.7%	-10.2%	61.9%	86.5%
Republican County Party Committees	-37.0%	-40.0%	-25.5%	-30.2%
Total-Both Parties	-18.0%	-22.5%	38.4%	26.8%

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

Brindle said both parties raise far less money than they did in the early 2000s before tight curbs on public contractor donations pinched their coffers and independent special interest groups began competing for donor dollars.

“Bi-partisan legislative recommendations by ELEC should make it easier for state and county party officials to raise funds. The hope is these reforms will shift contributions from so-called “dark money” spenders that have rapidly grown in influence in recent years back to more accountable and transparent party committees,” he said.

Ten Democratic county party committees- Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Passaic, Salem, and Union- reported more than \$100,000 cash-on-hand totals. Hudson and Morris Counties reported a negative net worth, meaning they owe more than their cash reserves.

Table 3
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through December 31, 2020

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 135,079	\$ 138,942	\$ 4,841	\$ 4,841
Bergen	\$ 762,298	\$ 567,119	\$ 228,313	\$ 228,313
Burlington	\$ 245,750	\$ 64,832	\$ 186,569	\$ 180,194
Camden	\$ 606,736	\$ 787,820	\$ 160,713	\$ 160,713
Cape May	\$ 94,244	\$ 87,727	\$ 3,730	\$ 3,730
Cumberland	\$ 145,224	\$ 148,631	\$ 995	\$ 995
Essex	\$ 386,591	\$ 346,032	\$ 126,900	\$ 126,900
Gloucester	\$ 314,381	\$ 286,514	\$ 576,948	\$ 576,948
Hudson	\$ 158,041	\$ 145,243	\$ 51,826	\$ (86,949)
Hunterdon	\$ 46,835	\$ 37,722	\$ 27,963	\$ 27,963
Mercer	\$ 112,506	\$ 51,431	\$ 258,441	\$ 258,441
Middlesex	\$ 431,063	\$ 334,790	\$ 142,680	\$ 142,680
Monmouth	\$ 184,397	\$ 184,508	\$ 83	\$ 83
Morris	\$ 188,680	\$ 198,910	\$ (8,009)	\$ (8,009)
Ocean	\$ 32,371	\$ 42,006	\$ 13,693	\$ 29,860
Passaic	\$ 439,743	\$ 345,616	\$ 380,725	\$ 380,725
Salem*	\$ 12,100	\$ 13,235	\$ 100,895	\$ 100,895
Somerset	\$ 224,807	\$ 187,441	\$ 96,560	\$ 96,560
Sussex	\$ 13,903	\$ 10,338	\$ 13,288	\$ 13,288
Union	\$ 364,376	\$ 277,025	\$ 240,730	\$ 240,730
Warren*	\$ 5,052	\$ 5,768	\$ 18,466	\$ 18,466
Democrats-Total	\$4,904,177	\$4,261,651	\$2,626,349	\$2,497,366

*Third Quarter Totals

No Republican county committees reported more than \$100,000 in cash-on-hand at the end of 2020.

Table 4
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through December 31, 2020

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 22,892	\$ 36,915	\$ 7,310	\$ 7,310
Bergen	\$ 128,068	\$ 122,450	\$ 24,343	\$ 14,343
Burlington	\$ 232,618	\$ 243,396	\$ 14,577	\$572,074
Camden	\$ 35,164	\$ 31,861	\$ 11,306	\$ 11,306
Cape May	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cumberland	\$ 68,171	\$ 71,575	\$ 3,222	\$ 3,222
Essex	\$ 32,000	\$ 27,621	\$ 26,333	\$ 26,333
Gloucester	\$ 129,527	\$ 129,426	\$ 51,818	\$ 51,818
Hudson**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 108,010	\$ 98,997	\$ 12,662	\$ 12,662
Mercer	\$ 3,025	\$ 8,486	\$ 424	\$ 424
Middlesex	\$ 4,049	\$ 9,777	\$ 12,574	\$ 12,574
Monmouth	\$ 380,469	\$ 366,635	\$ 53,811	\$ 53,811
Morris	\$ 151,045	\$ 141,701	\$ 19,555	\$ 11,955
Ocean	\$ 178,349	\$ 139,346	\$ 55,670	\$ 55,670
Passaic	\$ 236,859	\$ 261,261	\$ 33,088	\$ 33,088
Salem	\$ 13,631	\$ 7,877	\$ 38,516	\$ 38,516
Somerset	\$ 108,417	\$ 147,370	\$ 11,870	\$ 11,870
Sussex	\$ 35,986	\$ 31,140	\$ 20,860	\$ 17,341
Union	\$ 50,270	\$ 56,929	\$ 37,546	\$ 37,546
Warren	\$ 54,235	\$ 52,238	\$ 8,010	\$ 8,010
Republicans-Total	\$1,972,784	\$1,985,003	\$443,496	\$979,873

**Does not expect to spend more than \$7,200

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon February 5, 2021. 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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