



NEWS RELEASE

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Revisions in bold italics

Bigger Percentage of Legislative Candidates Filed Personal Financial Disclosure Forms in 2021 than in 2019

Eighty-six percent of candidates who campaigned for legislative seats in the June 8 primary filed personal financial disclosure (PDFs) reports, up **eight** percentage points from 2019, according to an analysis by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Following a long-standing pattern, incumbents were more conscientious than challengers about submitting their reports.

Of the 108 incumbents pursuing either state Senate or Assembly seats, 102 (94%) filed their statutorily mandated disclosure forms. That was slightly below the 95 percent compliance rate in 2019. During the best year for incumbent compliance in 2015, compliance was 100 percent.

Among the 145 challengers seeking to become state lawmakers, **116 (80%)** complied with the law requiring them to give voters a glimpse of their personal finances. That was an improvement over the 66 percent compliance rate in 2019. The best challenger compliance rate since ELEC began doing this analysis in 2011 was 90 percent in 2013.

Table 1
Percentage of Legislative Primary Candidates
Filing Personal Disclosure Forms with ELEC

GROUP	CANDIDATES-2021	FILERS-2021	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011
Incumbents	108	102	94%	95%	94%	100%	99%	97%
Challengers	145	117	80%	66%	80%	84%	90%	87%
Totals	253	218	86%	78%	86%	91%	94%	91%

During the current election year, Republican incumbents had the highest compliance rate at 95 percent followed by Democratic incumbents at 94 percent. Republican challengers lagged the most at 77 percent. Democratic challengers did better at **84** percent.

Compared to the **86** percent average for all candidates, all Democratic candidates were higher at 90 percent while all Republican candidates were lower at **83** percent.

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Table 2
Compliance Rate by Party Affiliation

GROUP	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011
Republicans- Incumbents	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%
Democrats-Incumbents	94%	93%	92%	100%	99%	98%
All Democrats	90%	82%	90%	90%	91%	91%
All Candidates	86%	78%	86%	91%	94%	91%
Democrats-Challengers	84%	70%	89%	79%	83%	83%
All Republicans	83%	74%	81%	92%	97%	92%
Republicans- Challengers	77%	64%	75%	87%	95%	90%

New Jersey law requires candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the State Senate, and the Assembly to file a seven-page personal financial disclosure reports during the year of their candidacy.

The disclosure forms ask candidates to identify sources of earned income, such as salaries or bonuses, and unearned income, such as rents and dividends. Disclosure is required if the source of income exceeds \$1,000 in any one category. The statements list only sources of income, not dollar amounts. Candidates must also report sources of income received by spouses and children of candidates.

Candidates also must disclose gifts valued at more than \$250, and whether they own any property in a city where casino gambling is authorized. Candidates can face fines up to \$1,000 if they fail to file their PFD.

Table 3
Categories Checked Most Often by Candidates

CATEGORY	NUMBER	FREQUENCY
Salary- Candidate	191	75%
Salary- Spouse	106	42%
Other	86	34%
Dividends	67	26%
Rent	51	20%
Reimbursement	36	14%
Bonus	30	12%
Commissions	26	10%
Fees	20	8%
Profit	18	7%
Salary- Children	13	5%
Honorariums	7	3%
Gifts	2	1%
Royalties	2	1%
Own Property In City With Casinos	2	1%

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, called on the Legislature to adopt a bipartisan Commission recommendation to move to May 15 the deadline for the filing of personal financial disclosure reports. This year, candidates were supposed to submit these forms within 10 days after the April 1 deadline for filing primary nomination petitions. This can cause difficulties both for the candidates and ELEC.

May 15 is the same date that incumbent legislators must file separate disclosure forms with the Office of Legislative Services. "Using the same deadline for both reports makes more sense. The filing process will be smoother and still provide disclosure well before the election," said Brindle.

Copies of personal financial disclosure forms can be viewed by going to the "Candidate / Committee Filing Report" search page (<http://www.elec.state.nj.us/ELECReport/SearchCandidate.aspx>) and entering the candidate's name. Look for form PFD-1.

The cutoff date for the compliance checks in this report was June 10, 2021. Reports filed after that date are not included in the totals.

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