



NEWS RELEASE

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

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CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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National Money Lifted County Parties During Gubernatorial Election Year

A flood of large campaign checks from outside New Jersey helped fatten county party coffers to their largest totals since the last gubernatorial election in 2017, according to fourth quarter reports filed for 2021 with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

County party committees raised \$14.3 million and spent \$13.2 million in 2021, which are close to the totals for 2017.

“Historically, gubernatorial elections in New Jersey have drawn heavy out-of-state funding, chiefly from national governors associations, national affiliates of Garden State unions and wealthy individuals,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “County parties are among the beneficiaries.”

“In 2021, Democratic committees benefited most from their national ties. They raised 41 percent of their funds from out-of-state sources versus 7 percent for GOP committees,” said Brindle. “Democratic parties received 96 percent of all out-of-state funds versus 4 percent for Republicans.”

Table 1
Total Out of State Contributions
in 2021 to NJ County Parties

STATE OR DC	DEMOCATS	REPUBLICANS	TOTAL
District of Columbia	\$ 2,936,150	\$ 6,000	\$ 2,942,150
Pennsylvania	\$ 836,200	\$ 98,600	\$ 934,800
New York	\$ 440,950	\$ 8,400	\$ 449,350
Oklahoma	\$ 222,000		\$ 222,000
Maryland	\$ 177,850		\$ 177,850
Georgia	\$ 76,500		\$ 76,500
Other States	\$ 125,614	\$ 65,028	\$ 190,642
Total Out of State	\$ 4,815,264	\$ 178,028	\$ 4,993,292
Total Donations	\$11,761,403	\$2,535,587	\$14,296,990
Percent Out of State	41%	7%	

Nine of the top 25 donors to county parties are based in the District of Columbia, along with one each from New York, Pennsylvania and Oklahoma. Twenty-one of the top 25 are unions.

The top 25 donors contributed 49 percent of all funds raised by county party committees. Democratic committees received 55 percent of their contributions from the top 25 while Republicans committees received 18 percent.

Table 2
Top 25 Donors to New Jersey
County Party Committees in 2021

DONOR	STATE	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	TOTAL
Greater NJ Carpenters PEC	PA	\$ 626,750	\$ 86,300	\$ 713,050
Engineers Political Education Committee (Operating Engineers)	DC	\$ 592,000		\$ 592,000
New Jersey State Laborers PAC	NJ	\$ 564,700	\$ 4,000	\$ 568,700
United Food and Commercial Workers Int. Union	DC	\$ 461,000		\$ 461,000
Democratic Governors Association	DC	\$ 457,500		\$ 457,500
NJSPBA PAC (Police)	NJ	\$ 306,000	\$ 94,600	\$ 400,600
Laborers' Political League Education Fund	DC	\$ 342,500		\$ 342,500
IBEW Local 351 State PAC (Electrical Workers)	NJ	\$ 299,900	\$ 30,000	\$ 329,900
American Federation of Teachers	DC	\$ 315,100		\$ 315,100
New York Hotel Trades Council	NY	\$ 286,500		\$ 286,500
Nancy Pelosi For Congress	DC	\$ 259,000		\$ 259,000
Stacy Schusterman	OK	\$ 222,000		\$ 222,000
CWA NJ Political Education Committee (Communication Workers)	NJ	\$ 222,000		\$ 222,000
NJEA PAC (Teachers)	NJ	\$ 196,150	\$ 1,200	\$ 197,350
AFSCME-(County and Municipal Workers)	DC	\$ 190,200		\$ 190,200
Local Union 164 IBEW State Cope Fund (Electrical Workers)	NJ	\$ 173,000		\$ 173,000
Sheet Metal Workers Union #19	NJ	\$ 152,800		\$ 152,800
Operating Engineers Local 825	NJ	\$ 74,000	\$ 78,000	\$ 152,000
District Council of NJ Ironworkers PAC Fund	NJ	\$ 138,300	\$ 5,000	\$ 143,300
International Longshoremens Association Committee on Political Education	NJ	\$ 140,000		\$ 140,000
Bob Hugin- (State GOP Chairman and drug company executive)	NJ		\$ 139,500	\$ 139,500
IBEW Local Union 456 (Electrical Workers)	NJ	\$ 138,000		\$ 138,000
Drive Committee (Teamsters)	DC	\$ 125,000		\$ 125,000
IBEW PAC- (Electrical Workers)	DC	\$ 117,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 122,000
Local Union 400 (Electrical Workers)	NJ	\$ 90,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 111,000
Top 25 Totals		\$ 6,489,400	\$ 464,600	\$ 6,954,000
Total Contributions		\$11,761,403	\$2,535,587	\$14,296,990
Percent of Total Contributions		55%	18%	49%

The top 25 included two newcomers that have not given money to past New Jersey state elections.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi funneled \$259,000 to seven Democratic party committees, perhaps in anticipation of this year's mid-term congressional elections.

Stacy Schusterman, chair-person of Samson Energy in Oklahoma and a prominent Democratic donor nationally, gave \$222,000 to six county party committees.

Party committees received 76 checks worth \$37,000- the maximum contribution they can accept- from out-of-state donors compared to 52 from in-state donors. Democrats received 119 “max” checks while Republican received 9.

“Much of the increase in county party fund-raising during gubernatorial years is explained by the influx of out-of-state funds, particularly from the District of Columbia,” Brindle said.

While county parties hugely benefited from out-of-state financial support in 2021, the two gubernatorial candidates got the most help.

The most prominent example was the involvement of the Democratic and Republican Governors Associations. While the Democratic group donated \$457,500 to county parties, the two associations spent \$6.1 million on behalf of their respective gubernatorial candidates.

Table 3
Spending in New Jersey by Democratic and Republican
Governors Associations During 2021 Election

	DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION	REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION	BOTH ASSOCIATIONS¹
Independent Spending			
Direct Independent Spending		\$3,808,013	
DGA Contribution to Our NJ	\$1,983,268		
DGA Contribution to Turnout Project	\$ 300,000		
Total Independent Spending	\$2,283,268	\$3,808,013	\$6,091,281
Contributions to Candidates or Parties			
County Parties	\$ 457,500		
Democratic State Committee Or Legislative Leadership PACs	\$ 50,000		
Local candidates	\$ 18,200		
Total Contributions to Candidates or Parties	\$ 525,700		\$ 525,700
Total All Spending	\$2,808,968	\$3,808,013	\$6,616,981

While the gubernatorial election year helped swell county coffers in 2021, the totals were below the average for all six gubernatorial years since 2001 though higher than the average for non-gubernatorial election years.

“On average, county parties since 2001 have raised \$15.6 million, and spent \$15.3 million during the past six gubernatorial election years,” said. “Those averages are about 30 percent more than totals raised and spent during non-gubernatorial years.”

¹ Both associations are 527 political organizations. While they cannot make contributions to federal candidates, they can make contributions to state and local candidates along with engaging in independent spending.

Table 4
County Party Campaign Finance Activity
During Gubernatorial Election Years

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT
2001	\$21,952,725	\$21,872,999
2005	\$18,893,472	\$19,009,467
2009	\$13,854,662	\$13,306,296
2013	\$ 9,908,851	\$10,069,188
2017	\$14,564,574	\$14,114,921
2021	\$14,296,990	\$13,234,560
Average for All Gubernatorial Election Years	\$15,578,546	\$15,267,905
Averages for All Other Years	\$11,848,124	\$11,702,878
Average Increase During Gubernatorial Years- Dollars	\$ 3,730,421	\$ 3,565,027
Average Increase During Gubernatorial Years- Percent	31%	30%

Five county party committees- all Democratic- raised more than \$1 million in 2021 largely with help from out-of-state donors. Just those five committees received 39 percent of contributions that went to all county parties in 2021.

Table 5
County Party Committees That Raised
More Than \$1 million in 2021

COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEE	TOTAL²
Essex County Democratic Committee	\$ 1,334,690
Democratic Committee of Bergen County	\$ 1,101,480
Middlesex County Democratic Organization	\$ 1,098,177
Passaic County Democratic Committee	\$ 1,068,010
Union County Democratic Committee	\$ 1,027,816
Total	\$ 5,630,173
All Contributions to County Parties in 2021	\$14,296,990
Percent Just Top Five	39%

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² These totals came from a database of all contributions to county party committees. They differ from those on county party reports because the report totals are adjusted for refunds, contributions under \$300 and in-kind contributions.

Among Democratic county committees that have filed their quarterly reports, 11 committees-Bergen, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, and Union - reported cash balances above \$100,000.

Table 6
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through December 31, 2021

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 340,902	\$ 339,291	\$ 6,452	\$ 6,452
Bergen	\$ 1,124,991	\$ 1,207,063	\$ 146,241	\$ 146,241
Burlington	\$ 488,959	\$ 577,358	\$ 98,170	\$ 91,795
Camden	\$ 712,203	\$ 535,654	\$ 337,263	\$ 337,263
Cape May	\$ 61,672	\$ 64,062	\$ 3,554	\$ 3,554
Cumberland	\$ 126,550	\$ 119,909	\$ 7,636	\$ 7,636
Essex	\$ 1,361,182	\$ 1,135,407	\$ 352,675	\$ 352,675
Gloucester	\$ 598,100	\$ 922,766	\$ 252,282	\$ 252,282
Hudson	\$ 582,912	\$ 508,103	\$ 126,634	\$ (12,140)
Hunterdon	\$ 193,044	\$ 168,919	\$ 52,088	\$ 52,088
Mercer	\$ 526,654	\$ 354,757	\$ 430,337	\$ 430,337
Middlesex	\$ 1,151,185	\$ 1,111,805	\$ 182,060	\$ 182,060
Monmouth	\$ 719,366	\$ 647,215	\$ 72,234	\$ 72,234
Morris	\$ 386,689	\$ 384,659	\$ 10,167	\$ 10,166
Ocean	\$ 350,353	\$ 268,617	\$ 95,429	\$ 111,596
Passaic	\$ 1,094,455	\$ 875,683	\$ 599,497	\$ 599,497
Salem**	\$ 7,750	\$ 22,115	\$ 101,172	\$ 101,172
Somerset	\$ 669,618	\$ 623,194	\$ 133,714	\$ 133,714
Sussex	\$ 29,396	\$ 23,453	\$ 19,231	\$ 19,231
Union	\$ 1,072,268	\$ 802,477	\$ 510,521	\$ 510,521
Warren**	\$ 163,154	\$ 90,450	\$ 81,547	\$ 81,547
Democrats-Total	\$11,761,403	\$10,782,957	\$3,618,903	\$3,489,920

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

** Through third quarter

The Cape May County committee was the only Republican committee reporting a cash balance above \$100,000.

Table 7
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through December 31, 2021

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 112,819	\$ 88,292	\$ 31,837	\$ 31,837
Bergen	\$ 93,849	\$ 115,258	\$ 2,933	\$ (7,067)
Burlington	\$ 168,495	\$ 141,761	\$ 40,721	\$ 549,013
Camden	\$ 3,645	\$ 5,946	\$ 10,288	\$ 10,288
Cape May	\$ 243,927	\$ 156,106	\$131,587	\$ 131,587
Cumberland	\$ 51,739	\$ 53,094	\$ 1,867	\$ 1,867
Essex	\$ 22,500	\$ 30,854	\$ 17,979	\$ 17,979
Gloucester	\$ 42,825	\$ 78,982	\$ 15,661	\$ 15,661
Hudson**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 189,655	\$ 181,765	\$ 20,553	\$ 20,553
Mercer	\$ 15,113	\$ 13,966	\$ 1,571	\$ 1,570
Middlesex	\$ 19,781	\$ 24,348	\$ 8,007	\$ 8,007
Monmouth	\$ 367,662	\$ 372,138	\$ 49,335	\$ 49,335
Morris	\$ 242,009	\$ 256,692	\$ 4,872	\$ (10,128)
Ocean	\$ 180,220	\$ 232,905	\$ 2,985	\$ 2,985
Passaic	\$ 313,530	\$ 324,562	\$ 22,056	\$ 22,056
Salem	\$ 9,244	\$ 15,980	\$ 24,279	\$ 24,279
Somerset***	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sussex	\$ 219,393	\$ 144,569	\$ 94,494	\$ 94,494
Union	\$ 149,657	\$ 130,677	\$ 56,527	\$ 56,527
Warren	\$ 89,524	\$ 83,944	\$ 13,590	\$ 13,590
Republicans-Total	\$2,535,587	\$2,451,838	\$ 555,142	\$1,034,433

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

** Does not expect to spend more than \$7,200 in 2021.*** No reports filed in 2021

NA-not available

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon February 2, 2022. 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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