



NEWS RELEASE

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Former Governor Jim McGreevey Favors More Disclosure for Independent Election Spenders

Former Governor Jim McGreevey said he supports expanded disclosure laws for independent groups that are increasingly dominating elections while acknowledging “there’s a natural tendency to not want to disclose.”

“I think the natural tendency is to be fearful of the possible thrust and parry, the attack, the criticism,” he said during a June 8, 2022 interview with ELEC Executive Director Jeff Brindle.

McGreevey added, however, if the same disclosure rules apply to everyone, “then it all makes sense.”

He is the ninth person to participate in an ongoing project entitled “History of the NJ Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).” Full interviews can be viewed on ELEC’s website at: https://www.elec.nj.gov/aboutelec/ELEC_OralHistory.htm.

McGreevey knows from experience how a candidate can be disadvantaged if they are the only one divulging their donors and expenses, which might become campaign fodder, while opponents are raising money in secret.

Before he was elected the state’s 52nd governor in November 2001 after serving in the legislature, McGreevey formed a federal political action committee (PAC) named Committee on Working Families to help promote his candidacy before his formal declaration. He raised about \$530,000 through the PAC and fully disclosed his contributions and expenditures.

McGreevey said he weighed the pros and cons but decided “I’m going to do it because it is the right thing to do and I’ll earn points in the Book of Life.”

Around the same time, three Republican candidates positioning themselves for possible runs raised and spent more than \$4 million combined using committees that initially kept such information confidential though it later was disclosed due to public pressure and changing state and federal laws.

At the state level, the Legislature, with just one no vote, approved a new law requiring would-be gubernatorial candidates who raise money for pre-primary promotional activities to fully disclose their donors and spending or be precluded from the state’s public financing program for gubernatorial candidates.

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Governor Christine Todd Whitman signed the bill on January 30, 2001, one day before she resigned her office to become administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Since the disclosure bill was enacted two decades ago gubernatorial candidates have disclosed nearly \$25 million that otherwise would have been “dark money” spent on unofficial campaign activity.

On another issue, McGreevey said he supports efforts to strengthen New Jersey political parties even though he acknowledged that county party leaders in particular sometimes caused him headaches when he was governor due to skirmishes over appointments and legislation.

Despite those frustrations, “in terms of the stability of the republic, I think county organizations are a good thing.”

In June 2004, McGreevey enacted a 20-bill package of bills expanding ELEC’s responsibilities while also providing a \$2 million appropriation to the agency. He acknowledged “there’s a certain amount of where people look at ELEC almost like the IRS, like if I starve them, maybe their function will dissipate...I don’t think that’s how it works.” “I think the reputation of ELEC is sound and is good. Not only your leadership. But I think people understand the importance of it...It’s important to have the most robust ELEC to have the most democratic experience, to encourage best practices,” he said.

The History of the Commission Project Archive:

- [Volume I – Interview with ELEC Chairman Eric Jaso- 2017-Present](#)▶
- [Volume II – Interview with former ELEC Executive Director Lewis Thurston- 1976 -1981](#)▶
- [Volume III – Interview with former State Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts- 2006-2009](#)▶
- [Volume IV – Interview with former New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean 1982-1990](#)▶
- [Volume V – Interview with former New Jersey State Senate President John Lynch- 1989-1991](#)▶
- [Volume VI – Interview with former ELEC Chairman Ron DeFilippis- 2010-2017](#)▶
- [Volume VII – Interview with former ELEC Chairwoman Jerry English- 2004-2010](#)
- [Volume VIII- Interview with former Governor Christine Todd Whitman- 1994-2001](#)

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