



# NEWS RELEASE

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A modern, more streamlined website with powerful new tools for accessing and interpreting campaign finance and lobbying information was unveiled today by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said the website ([www.elec.nj.gov](http://www.elec.nj.gov)) is a major advance over a previous one that first went active in 1997.

"ELEC is among the best campaign finance disclosure agencies in the United States. Our recent computer upgrades will keep the agency in the national vanguard for many years," he said.

"We think the new website offers many advantages," said Brindle. "The home page is simpler and makes it easier to find a topic. The site offers significant new search tools. And it allows for more convenient viewing on laptops, tablets and smart phones."

In addition, the agency soon will be using the site to permit all candidates and political fundraising committees to submit their forms online.

Some of the key new features:

- A cleaner, less text-heavy home page that enables quick access to most sections of the website.
- For the first time, users will be able to search a database of candidate expenses as well as contributions. Right now, only information about gubernatorial candidates can be searched. Queries will give a summary of expenses and allow users to "drill down" into the details. The site will include expenses reported by all candidates once electronic filing is mandatory.
- The ability to search for candidate reports by clicking on maps that display legislative districts or counties.
- Users who query the master database of candidate contributions will now see summaries such as top five contributors, top five contributors by firm, and top five contributors by occupations.
- Website visitors can also do sophisticated queries on information contained in quarterly lobbying reports. For instance, a user can enter a bill number and see what lobbyists are actively working to support or defeat the bill.

- The website follows new technical standards that enable it to automatically reorient itself if someone is viewing it on a laptop, tablet or smartphone.
- Within the next six months to a year, all campaign finance filers, including candidates, political parties and political action committees, will be able to file their reports online.

Brindle said the improvements to the website and its underlying computer hardware and software were made possible because of a special \$2 million appropriation in the fiscal year 2014-2015 state budget.

“ELEC won an award as the state’s best website in 2010. It is even better now with our latest upgrades,” he said.

Prior to receiving the special appropriation, the agency already had made many of its legacy documents available online, including all minutes, advisory opinions, press releases, and annual reports. Viewers can now conveniently search for reports filed by independent special interest groups that are becoming a major part of campaigns in New Jersey.

In addition, ELEC now provides electronic access to lobbyist annual and quarterly reports, and is one of the few agencies in the nation that enables the public to search contributions to local officials. Thousands of disclosure reports filed by public contractors since 2006 are available online along with spreadsheets containing information from those reports.

Brindle said the sweeping revamp of ELEC’s website wouldn’t have been possible without the hard work of the information technology staff. “I especially want to salute the efforts of IT Director Anthony Giancarli, former Director Carol Neiman, and Principal Webmaster Maryanne Garcia,” he said.

Legislators from both parties supported the appropriation, as did Governor Chris Christie, who included it in his budget, said Brindle. “ELEC greatly appreciates the support in these tough budget times.”

Along with Governor Christie, Brindle thanked former state Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff and Jennifer Duffy, former Treasury Department Chief of Staff; Senate President Stephen Sweeney, Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, and Senators Paul Sarlo, Sam Thompson, Anthony Bucco, Joseph Pennacchio and James Whelan; Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick, and Assembly members Gary Schaer and John McKeon.

People with questions about using the new website can contact ELEC’s help desk at 609-292-8700 or toll-free within New Jersey at 1-888-313-ELEC (3532).

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