



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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Independent groups have begun spending money in a handful of legislative districts even as direct spending by legislative candidates has reached \$17.8 million with the June 6 primary less than a week away.

Table 1
Campaign Finance Activity for 2017
Legislative Primary Through May 23

GROUP	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Candidates	\$31,538,723	\$17,818,260	\$13,772,344
Independent Committees	NA	\$ 905,224	NA
Totals	\$31,538,723	\$18,723,484	\$13,772,344

NA=Not Available

Reports filed by three independent groups show they have spent \$905,224 in four legislative districts plus some statewide.

Table 2
Spending by Independent Committees
in Legislative Primary Contests

GROUP	DISTRICT	AMOUNT
Garden State Forward	3, Statewide	\$627,674
Stronger Foundations Inc	24, 26	\$275,100
New Jersey Family First	40	\$ 2,450
Totals		\$905,224

“This is just a hint of things to come. While independent spending so far is a fraction of total spending, recent legislative elections have shown that independent groups are likely to be a major force in the fall elections,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director.

As an example, he said independent groups in 2015 spent less than \$1 million during the legislative primary yet ultimately shelled out \$10.7 million on legislative elections.

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The latest reports filed by legislative candidates reflect fundraising activity between May 6 and May 23. Those reports show Democrats continue to hold a large advantage over Republicans.

Table 3
Party Breakdown of
Legislative Campaign Finance Activity

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Democrats	\$22,259,997	\$11,566,792	\$10,688,323
Republicans	\$ 9,278,726	\$ 6,251,468	\$ 3,084,021
Both Parties	\$31,538,723	\$17,818,260	\$13,772,344

The governor's seat and both legislative houses are at stake in this year's election. Currently, a Republican is governor, and Democrats own 16 of the 24 Senate seats while controlling a 52 to 28 margin in the Assembly.

Incumbents continue to hold a big edge over challengers in most districts.

Table 4
Campaign Finance Activity
Incumbents Versus Challengers

STATUS	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Incumbents	\$28,144,363	\$16,377,082	\$11,909,483
Challengers	\$ 3,394,360	\$ 1,441,178	\$ 1,862,860
All Candidates	\$31,538,723	\$17,818,260	\$13,772,344

Candidates vying for 40 Senate seats continue to out-raise and out-spend those seeking to fill the 80 Assembly seats.

Table 5
Campaign Finance Activity
by Legislative House

HOUSE	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Assembly	\$14,067,961	\$ 7,685,447	\$ 6,389,444
Senate	\$17,470,762	\$10,132,813	\$ 7,382,899
Both Houses	\$31,538,723	\$17,818,260	\$13,772,344

The numbers in this report should be considered preliminary. This analysis is based on legislative reports received by noon May 31, 2017.

Reports filed by legislative candidates are available online on ELEC's website at www.elec.state.nj.us. A downloadable summary of data from those reports is available in both spreadsheet and PDF formats at www.elec.state.nj.us/publicinformation/statistics.htm.