



## 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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Fundraising by New Jersey's county political parties averaged \$8.2 million annually during the first seven years of the decade, an analysis by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) shows.

According to the report, these totals represent a 50 percent decrease in comparison to the last seven years of the previous decade. Between 2003 and 2009 county party receipts averaged \$16.6 million per year.

The same pattern emerged when comparing average spending between the two periods. From 2010 through 2016, county parties spent an average \$8.3 million compared with \$16.6 million during the last seven years of the previous decade, for a 50 percent drop.

"This steep and unprecedented decline in county party financial activity raises a red flag," said Jeff Brindle, Executive Director of the Commission. "Without a shadow of a doubt, the party system in New Jersey is in deep trouble and needs to be restored."

According to Brindle, the breakdown of the party system followed the passage of a complicated scheme of pay-to-play laws in 2005 and worsened when independent group spending increased following the "Citizens United decision in 2010."

"The proof is in the pudding," said Brindle. "During the four years prior to pay-to-play, party receipts averaged \$22 million annually. From 2006, when pay-to-play went into effect, the four-year annual average dropped to \$12.5 million."

The report further shows that during the first seven years of this decade, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Citizens United, financial activity by the county parties, as noted, dropped even further.

"The pay-to-play law is overly complicated and confusing," said Brindle. As a result, money flowed away from the parties and into newly created special interest PACs designed to get around the law."

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Brindle added, "Citizens United then made the situation worse, serving as a stimulus to the growth of spending and influence by outside, independent groups in New Jersey, further draining money from the parties.

Independent groups spent \$28 million on ballot questions in 2016, \$11.6 million on Assembly contests in 2015, and \$41 million on the gubernatorial and legislative elections of 2013.

The analysis grew out of a report on county party financial activity during 2016.

Between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016, county party committees reported raising \$8.4 million and spending \$8.1 million, with cash-on-hand amounting to a little over \$2.2 million.

These figures represent a 12 percent decline in fundraising from 2008, when county parties raised \$9.6 million. The 2016 spending totals declined by 15 percent from 2008, when expenditures reached \$9.5 million.

2008 was a similar election year to 2016.

In 2016, Democratic county party committees reported raising \$5.3 million and spending \$4.7 million while Republican county party committees raised \$3.1 million and spent \$3.3 million.

Democratic committees have cash-on-hand of \$1.6 million compared to Republican committees, which have \$595,685 left.

"A weak party system is not in the interest of the public, particularly when political party activities are dwarfed by independent, often anonymous groups, and special interest PACs," said Brindle.

The Commission has put forward proposals that would strengthen political parties, offset independent groups, and simplify and strengthen pay-to-play. These proposals include: raising contribution limits for contributions made to parties, excluding parties from pay-to-play, allowing state parties to participate in gubernatorial campaigns, allowing parties to give to each other, and loosening federal rules on state party accounts. They also include registration and disclosure of independent groups, one State pay-to-play law, an end to fair and open provision, and special interest PACs under pay-to-play.

**TABLE 1  
COUNTY PARTY AVERAGE  
FINANCIAL ACTIVITY**

YEARS	AVERAGE	
	RAISED	SPENT
2003 -2009	\$16,640,061	\$16,601,581
2010 - 2016	\$ 8,239,415	\$ 8,261,295
<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>-50 %</b>	<b>-50%</b>

**TABLE 2**  
**COUNTY PARTY FUNDRAISING AND SPENDING**  
**2001-2016 TOTALS**

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	MAJOR STATE ELECTION?
2001	\$ 21,952,725	\$ 21,872,999	Yes†
2002	\$ 21,578,971	\$ 19,918,454	No
2003	\$ 27,180,067	\$ 28,110,780	Yes
2004	\$ 20,481,002	\$ 19,548,718	No
2005	\$ 18,893,472	\$ 19,009,467	Yes
2006	\$ 11,977,748	\$ 12,392,107	No
2007	\$ 14,582,167	\$ 14,341,683	Yes
2008	\$ 9,511,311	\$ 9,502,015	No
2009	\$ 13,854,662	\$ 13,306,296	Yes
2010	\$ 7,591,065	\$ 8,712,802	No
2011	\$ 8,600,478	\$ 8,696,067	Yes
2012	\$ 6,407,139	\$ 5,885,971	No
2013	\$ 9,908,851	\$ 10,069,188	Yes†
2014	\$ 7,617,324	\$ 7,526,250	No
2015	\$ 9,161,877	\$ 8,883,225	Yes
2016	\$ 8,389,170	\$ 8,055,559	No

†Elections with both legislative houses and gubernatorial candidates running.

**TABLE 3**  
**CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF DEMOCRATIC COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES**  
**JANUARY 1, 2016 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH
<b>Atlantic</b>	\$ 97,553	\$ 65,740	\$ 34,860	\$ 34,860
<b>Bergen</b>	\$ 784,274	\$ 720,024	\$ 130,042	\$ 64,410
<b>Burlington</b>	\$ 127,261	\$ 126,800	\$ 2,248	\$ (83,719)
<b>Camden</b>	\$ 410,689	\$ 483,432	\$ 137,584	\$ 137,584
<b>Cape May*</b>	\$ 7,497	\$ 11,094	\$ 1,194	\$ 1,194
<b>Cumberland</b>	\$ 125,070	\$ 116,648	\$ 13,611	\$ 13,611
<b>Essex</b>	\$ 415,209	\$ 429,575	\$ 37,023	\$ 37,023
<b>Gloucester</b>	\$ 564,732	\$ 254,110	\$ 327,867	\$ 327,867
<b>Hudson</b>	\$ 238,352	\$ 217,458	\$ 83,244	\$ (55,901)
<b>Hunterdon</b>	\$ 20,140	\$ 19,806	\$ 8,115	\$ 8,115
<b>Mercer</b>	\$ 102,900	\$ 79,642	\$ 72,208	\$ 72,208
<b>Middlesex</b>	\$ 456,307	\$ 464,314	\$ 101,830	\$ 101,830
<b>Monmouth</b>	\$ 854,847	\$ 864,854	\$ 5,773	\$ 5,773
<b>Morris*</b>	\$ 92,674	\$ 62,007	\$ 41,396	\$ 41,396
<b>Ocean</b>	\$ 40,169	\$ 37,618	\$ 14,040	\$ 30,207
<b>Passaic</b>	\$ 651,204	\$ 559,347	\$ 435,213	\$ 435,213
<b>Salem*</b>	\$ 15,530	\$ 7,079	\$ 34,731	\$ 34,731
<b>Somerset*</b>	\$ 102,470	\$ 71,984	\$ 38,164	\$ 38,164
<b>Sussex</b>	\$ 26,296	\$ 30,269	\$ 9,737	\$ 9,737
<b>Union</b>	\$ 116,416	\$ 113,915	\$ 92,221	\$ 83,667
<b>Warren*</b>	\$ 9,292	\$ 11,988	\$ 922	\$ 922
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,258,882</b>	<b>\$4,747,704</b>	<b>\$1,622,023</b>	<b>\$1,338,892</b>

\*Cumulative through Third Quarter.

**TABLE 4**  
**CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF REPUBLICAN COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES**  
**JANUARY 1, 2016 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

	<b>RAISED</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND</b>	<b>NETWORTH</b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	\$ 46,006	\$ 45,022	\$ 2,519	\$ 2,519
<b>Bergen</b>	\$ 281,098	\$ 400,347	\$ 51,095	\$ 41,095
<b>Burlington</b>	\$ 912,063	\$ 926,253	\$ 3,615	\$ 828,894
<b>Camden</b>	\$ 35,226	\$ 21,438	\$ 19,091	\$ 19,091
<b>Cape May*</b>	\$ 124,278	\$ 111,027	\$ 47,407	\$ 47,407
<b>Cumberland</b>	\$ 73,998	\$ 66,367	\$ 35,921	\$ 35,921
<b>Essex</b>	\$ 23,000	\$ 21,320	\$ 8,357	\$ 8,357
<b>Gloucester</b>	\$ 49,948	\$ 50,360	\$ 7,773	\$ 7,773
<b>Hudson***</b>				
<b>Hunterdon</b>	\$ 95,129	\$ 97,575	\$ 9,703	\$ 4,203
<b>Mercer</b>	\$ 13,970	\$ 14,937	\$ 4,590	\$ 4,590
<b>Middlesex</b>	\$ 67,223	\$ 47,304	\$ 33,680	\$ 33,680
<b>Monmouth</b>	\$ 553,687	\$ 550,805	\$ 9,624	\$ 9,624
<b>Morris</b>	\$ 146,828	\$ 146,239	\$ 23,453	\$ 23,453
<b>Ocean</b>	\$ 119,433	\$ 148,161	\$ 14,446	\$ 14,446
<b>Passaic*</b>	\$ 38,288	\$ 29,364	\$ 9,276	\$ 9,276
<b>Salem**</b>	\$ 23,785	\$ 24,824	\$ 7,929	\$ 7,929
<b>Somerset</b>	\$ 369,583	\$ 476,781	\$ 232,723	\$ 231,411
<b>Sussex</b>	\$ 52,790	\$ 40,852	\$ 22,624	\$ 22,624
<b>Union</b>	\$ 97,495	\$ 87,148	\$ 52,984	\$ 52,984
<b>Warren</b>	\$ 30,245	\$ 26,555	\$ 6,804	\$ 6,804
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,130,288</b>	<b>\$3,307,855</b>	<b>\$ 595,685</b>	<b>\$1,404,152</b>

\*Cumulative through Third Quarter

\*\* Cumulative through Second Quarter.

\*\*\*Spent less than \$5,500 during calendar year.

**TABLE 5**  
**SUMMARY OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES**  
**JANUARY 1, 2016 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

	<b>RAISED</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND</b>	<b>NETWORTH</b>
Democratic County Party Committees	\$5,258,882	\$4,747,704	\$1,622,023	\$1,338,892
Republican County Party Committees	\$3,130,288	\$3,307,855	\$ 595,685	\$1,404,152
<b>TOTAL OF BOTH PARTIES</b>	<b>\$8,389,170</b>	<b>\$8,055,559</b>	<b>\$2,217,708</b>	<b>\$2,743,044</b>

**TABLE 6**  
**SUMMARY OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES**  
**JANUARY 1, 2008 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2008**

	<b>RAISED IN 2008</b>	<b>SPENT IN 2008</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND IN 2008</b>	<b>NETWORTH IN 2008</b>
Democratic County Party Committees	\$6,392,193	\$6,431,897	\$1,703,281	\$1,373,013
Republican County Party Committees	\$3,166,889	\$3,050,374	\$ 273,168	\$ 835,338
<b>TOTAL OF BOTH PARTIES</b>	<b>\$9,559,082</b>	<b>\$9,482,271</b>	<b>\$1,976,449</b>	<b>\$2,208,351</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 2008 AND 2016</b>				
Democratic County Party Committees	-18%	-26%	-5%	-2%
Republican County Party Committees	-1%	8%	118%	68%
<b>TOTAL OF BOTH PARTIES</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>-15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>24%</b>

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon January 27, 2017. They have yet to be verified by ELEC staff, and should be considered preliminary.

Interested parties are encouraged to review individual reports at ELEC's website ([www.elec.state.nj.us](http://www.elec.state.nj.us)).

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