



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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With fall elections looming, county political parties are sitting on a collective cash reserve of nearly \$2.8 million after the first six months of 2018, an 86 percent increase from four years earlier, according to reports filed with the NJ Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Unlike last year, when the ballot featured campaigns for governor and all 120 legislative seats, this fall features contests for a US Senate seat, 12 congressional seats, five legislative seats (special elections to fill vacancies) and multiple local offices.

While both parties have shown modest improvement in fund-raising since 2014, what stands out is the fact that they are sitting on a hoard of cash after a major election year.

Democratic cash-on-hand is up 123 percent to \$2.1 million. Republicans have stashed away \$640,560, or 21 percent more. The combined \$2.8 million total is the largest cash-on-hand at the six-month juncture since at least 2008.

“With one of only two gubernatorial campaigns nationally last year, national parties poured a substantial sum into county party warchests, particularly on the Democratic side,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “Party leaders may have held onto some of that cash because this fall’s federal races are expected to be competitive.”

Table 1
County Party Fundraising and Spending
through First Quarter 2009-2018

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATEWIDE ELECTIONS?
2009	\$2,829,837	\$3,044,906	\$1,713,660	G/A
2010	\$2,070,581	\$2,327,162	\$1,746,121	No
2011	\$2,617,165	\$2,374,567	\$1,444,408	S/A
2012	\$2,115,739	\$2,186,873	\$1,036,375	No
2013	\$2,647,728	\$2,560,856	\$1,627,287	G/S/A
2014	\$2,379,387	\$2,316,264	\$1,492,059	No
2015	\$2,597,718	\$2,365,487	\$1,706,465	A
2016	\$2,811,365	\$2,409,239	\$2,088,607	No
2017	\$3,585,017	\$3,060,539	\$2,768,884	G/S/A
2018	\$2,847,179	\$2,736,142	\$2,793,340	No

*G=Gubernatorial;S=Senate;A=Assembly; Does not include federal elections.

Compared to 2014, Democrats are having more success with fund-raising than Republicans, perhaps because it is the first time in eight years that their party has controlled both the governor’s seat and both legislative houses.

**Table 2
Summary of Campaign Finance Activity by County Committees
January 1 through June 30, 2018 Versus 2014**

	RAISED-2018	SPENT-2018	CASH-ON-HAND-2018	NET WORTH-2018
Democratic County Party Committees	\$1,785,927	\$1,754,058	\$2,152,780	\$1,971,542
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,061,252	\$ 982,084	\$ 640,560	\$1,416,473
Total-Both Parties	\$2,847,179	\$2,736,142	\$2,793,340	\$3,388,015
	RAISED-2014	SPENT-2014	CASH-ON-HAND-2014	NET WORTH-2014*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$1,397,239	\$1,400,325	\$ 963,300	\$ 585,711
Republican County Party Committees	\$ 982,148	\$ 915,939	\$ 528,760	\$1,318,464
Total-Both Parties	\$2,379,387	\$2,316,264	\$1,492,059	\$1,904,175
Difference 2018 versus 2014				
Democratic County Party Committees	28%	25%	123%	237%
Republican County Party Committees	8%	7%	21%	7%
Total-Both Parties	20%	18%	87%	78%

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

One thing that has helped is that Democratic congressional candidates have shared more of their campaign funds with county parties than Republican candidates over the past three years.

Democratic candidates have contributed at least \$335,571 to county parties during that period, while Republicans have ponied up \$264,323. So far this year, Democrats have contributed \$61,900 while Republicans have given \$24,360 to their respective parties.

**Table 3
Donations By Congressional Candidates To County Parties**

YEAR	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	TOTAL
2018	\$ 61,900	\$ 24,360	\$ 86,260
2017	\$ 69,850	\$117,500	\$187,350
2016	\$203,821	\$122,463	\$326,284
Total- 2016-2018	\$335,571	\$264,323	\$599,894

Even with their improved fortunes, fundraising pales compared to earlier years before parties faced stiffer competition from independent special interest groups and public contractors were allowed to make much larger contributions.

For instance, in 2004, also a non-election year, county parties raised \$6.3 million during the first two quarters- more than twice this year’s haul.

Brindle said legislation recommended by ELEC could make it easier for state and county parties to raise money while shifting funds away from independent special interest groups that dominate federal, state and even local elections. Another advantage, he said, is that parties are far more transparent than many independent groups.

“We hope legislative leaders this fall will take up bipartisan ELEC recommendations that could reinvigorate the parties while putting the brakes on the rapid growth of independent groups,” Brindle said.

Among the Democratic county committees that filed their latest reports, Bergen, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Passaic and Union Counties reported cash-on-hand larger than \$100,000. Burlington and Hudson Counties reported a negative net worth, meaning they owe more than their cash reserves.

Table 4
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through June 30, 2018

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 30,716	\$ 27,810	\$ 12,281	\$ 12,281
Bergen	\$ 245,782	\$ 173,331	\$ 123,194	\$ 82,563
Burlington**	\$ 11,786	\$ 22,901	\$ 12,580	\$ (4,998)
Camden	\$ 197,375	\$ 136,801	\$ 409,577	\$ 409,577
Cape May	\$ 39,551	\$ 40,382	\$ 695	\$ 695
Cumberland	\$ 14,857	\$ 44,448	\$ 2,876	\$ 2,876
Essex	\$ 180,226	\$ 188,479	\$ 117,077	\$ 117,077
Gloucester	\$ 153,848	\$ 92,209	\$ 384,720	\$ 384,720
Hudson	\$ 801	\$ 119,091	\$ 26,535	\$ (112,610)
Hunterdon	\$ 14,454	\$ 16,337	\$ 17,054	\$ 17,054
Mercer	\$ 370	\$ 27,862	\$ 96,193	\$ 96,193
Middlesex	\$ 269,599	\$ 304,388	\$ 4,775	\$ 4,775
Monmouth	\$ 80,862	\$ 79,190	\$ 10,388	\$ 10,338
Morris	\$ 78,615	\$ 70,332	\$ 18,577	\$ 18,577
Ocean	\$ 25,420	\$ 38,450	\$ 54,705	\$ 70,872
Passaic	\$ 180,826	\$ 117,620	\$ 591,510	\$ 591,510
Salem***	\$ 3,425	\$ 17,532	\$ 96,855	\$ 96,855
Somerset	\$ 28,864	\$ 46,633	\$ 16,788	\$ 16,788
Sussex	\$ 5,798	\$ 7,353	\$ 4,771	\$ 4,771
Union	\$ 222,751	\$ 182,909	\$ 151,627	\$ 151,627
Warren	NA	NA	NA	NA
Democrats-Total	\$1,785,927	\$1,754,058	\$2,152,780	\$1,971,542

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

First quarter totals; *Includes ELEC adjustments; NA= No reports available

Among Republican county committees that filed their reports, Salem County reported cash-on-hand above \$100,000 while Burlington and Salem Counties reported net worths larger than \$100,000.

Table 5
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through June 30, 2018

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 7,699	\$ 16,353	\$ 13,745	\$ 13,745
Bergen	\$ 28,320	\$ 30,767	\$ 4,890	\$ 4,890
Burlington	\$ 454,880	\$ 464,800	\$ 27,692	\$ 815,797
Camden	\$ 5,880	\$ 13,011	\$ 12,944	\$ 12,944
Cape May	\$ 108,256	\$ 40,845	\$ 75,108	\$ 75,108
Cumberland	\$ 32,814	\$ 18,002	\$ 29,351	\$ 29,351
Essex	\$ 15,500	\$ 17,060	\$ 1,687	\$ 1,687
Gloucester	\$ 6,425	\$ 5,552	\$ 9,211	\$ 9,211
Hudson	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 22,295	\$ 24,978	\$ 5,865	\$ 5,865
Mercer	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,576	\$ 26,851	\$ 26,851
Middlesex	\$ 7,260	\$ 8,265	\$ 9,334	\$ 9,334
Monmouth	\$ 61,643	\$ 72,566	\$ 22,847	\$ 22,847
Morris***	\$ 77,357	\$ 73,727	\$ 11,023	\$ 2,303
Ocean	\$ 38,453	\$ 26,297	\$ 14,465	\$ 14,465
Passaic	\$ 16,000	\$ 1,611	\$ 14,389	\$ 14,389
Salem	\$ 16,549	\$ 24,245	\$215,469	\$ 215,469
Somerset	\$ 85,080	\$ 76,080	\$ 50,834	\$ 47,363
Sussex	\$ 19,955	\$ 26,856	\$ 27,446	\$ 27,446
Union	\$ 37,800	\$ 27,017	\$ 53,465	\$ 53,465
Warren	\$ 11,085	\$ 11,474	\$ 13,945	\$ 13,945
Republicans-Total	\$1,061,252	\$ 982,084	\$640,560	\$1,416,473

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

***Includes ELEC adjustments; NA= No reports available

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon July 31, 2018. 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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