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AN ELECTION LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION NEWSLETTER "Furthering the Interest of an Informed Citizenry"

ELEC Executive Director Amanda Haines Speaks at Rowan University

By Joe Donohue **Deputy Director**



Amanda Haines, ELEC's Executive Director, discussed "Challenges and Opportunities for Campaign Finance Regulation" during a September 25, 2024 speaking engagement at Rowan University in Glassboro.

Haines addressed an audience of 35 students, faculty and others as part of an ongoing series of speeches arranged by the school's Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship.

Other recent speakers include state Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin

> (D-19), state Senate Minority Leader Anthony Bucco (R-25), and U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-11).

During her talk, Haines explained how national and state scandals in the early 1970s led to the creation of ELEC. Cynicism and distrust were rampant among voters.

"In part, ELEC was created to address this cynicism by shining a light on the

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sources of campaign funding for offices of every level in the state," she said.

Haines described ELEC's mission statement, "The essence of Democracy is an informed electorate. ELEC

embraces the fulfillment of this goal as its mission," and detailed the tools available to support that mission.

In its early pre-Internet days, citizens, reporters and others would have to travel to ELEC's office and thumb through paper reports. Today, candidates and non-candidate fundraising committees all file their disclosure reports online and the public can quickly view them via the agency's website.

"What started out as a public room full of reports, complaints and final decisions that required a trip to Trenton to view and photocopy has evolved into a website with a vast amount of information at the public's disposal," Haines said.

"In the past year, the Commission has made information more accessible than it ever has been. All reports received by 5 p.m. on a due date are available for public inspection that day," she added.

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Thomas H. Prol, Chairman
Norma R. Evans, Commissioner
Ryan Peters, Commissioner
Jon-Henry Barr, Commissioner
Edwin R Matthews Legal Counse

She urged people to visit ELEC's website at www.elec.nj.gov to check information that might influence their vote. ELEC staff are available at 609-292-8700 Monday through Friday between 9 am and 5 pm to answer questions related to using the website.



On a personal note, Haines revealed that her mother, a long-time teacher, is an alum at Glassboro State College, Rowan's predecessor.

After working as a lawyer at ELEC for 19 years, Haines, a Hammonton native, was chosen by the Commission to be the agency's sixth executive director and the first female to hold that post. She assumed her position on May 4, 2024.

ELEC Timeline Provides Key Background on State's Campaign Finance Enforcement Body

By Joe Donohue Deputy Director

On June 28, 1972, the Republican Secretary of State became the 131st public official in New Jesey indicted for corruption since 1969. The very next day, a former Democratic Secretary of State was fined and place on probation for three years for accepting a bribe.

Twelve days earlier, a historic break-in at the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate office complex in

Washington DC rocked the nation. It sparked a wave of national and state reform legislation targeting political corruption, partly through the regulation of campaign fund-raising.

One of those new laws created the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) on April 24, 1973. Its main mission was- and remains- to discourage political wrong-

doing by keeping a spotlight on election financing through robust disclosure and penalties on candidates and committees that break its laws.

A historical overview of ELEC, now in its sixth decade, is available at https://www.elec.nj.gov/aboutelec/tim eline.htm. The timeline recently has been updated and can be downloaded from ELEC's website for those who might find it a useful reference.

"For a small state agency with just 65 employees, ELEC has had a disproportionate influence during its 51-year history," said Joe Donohue, ELEC's Deputy Director. "We have assembled this chronology to remind citizens why ELEC exists and the important role it has played during its existence."

The timeline also lists legislation and executive orders that amended the original statute plus many statistical milestones and events of special note.

Here is a sampling:

1977- A developer contributed the equivalent of \$1.7 million to the gubernatorial primary campaign of former Representative Robert A. Roe. It remains the biggest contribution to a candidate not self-financing.

1977- ELEC chairman Frank P. Reiche resigns to become a member of the Federal Election Commission. He served as chairman in 1982 and was the only one among 35 ELEC commissioner elevated to the agency's national counterpart.

1997- ELEC's first website went online.

2005- During an election in which the two major party nominees both self-financed their campaigns, spending on the governor's race soared to \$141 million in 2024 dollars and remains the record for a New Jersey election.

2016- A proposed ballot question that would have let casinos operate outside of Atlantic City was shot down by voters. It led to record ballot-question spending of nearly \$25 million.

2017- A single New Jersey legislative election cost an estimated \$24.1 million and, at least at the time, was believed to be the most expensive legislation in American history.

2020- Lobbying expenditures reached a record \$105 million as lawmakers enacted scores of bills to address the COVID-19 crisis, marijuana advocates pushed hard for legalization and a major health insurer secured legislation letting it reorganize.

2023- ELEC releases the most comprehensive history of recall elections ever, finding that almost 650 elected officials have been targeted for recall since the first state law was enacted in 1911 but only 96 have been directly removed by voters.

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The Evolution of Electronic Filing and Signing ELEC Reports

By Anthony Giancarli Information Technology Director

Twenty-seven years ago, ELEC launched its first website and joined the digital world.

Since that milestone, the agency whenever possible has sought to make it more convenient for candidates and other filers to electronically submit and manage their disclosure reports.

On August 16, 2024, ELEC published its new E-Sign Management System.

Using this online system, anyone responsible for filing a report with ELEC can now apply for and receive registration and personal identification (PIN) numbers that can be used right away.

The process is easy and straightforward. Feedback from the filing community has been overwhelmingly positive.

A drawback of the previous system is that it worked only during regular busy hours. Filers previously had to submit electronic signature forms to ELEC that that had to be reviewed by data entry workers before registration and PIN numbers could be issued.

The new system is automated so people can apply for registration and PIN numbers, change them or temporarily disable them 24/7.

ELEC has remained among the best campaign finance agencies in the country partly because it strives to

constantly improve its electronic services.

Initially, ELEC developed software that enabled gubernatorial candidates as well as legislative candidates raising over \$100,000 in contributions to submit reports via their personal computers.

One of the challenges was to find an acceptable means to electronically certify, or sign, submitted reports. At the time, legally valid electronic signatures were just emerging.

After some research, ELEC decided to assign each filer a unique registration number and a PIN. When combined, the two numbers securely identified the filer within ELEC's computer system.

In its earliest stages in 2001, the person responsible for certifying the electronic report had to submit a paper form with a hand-written signature to obtain the special number combination.

The registration and PIN numbers then were sent to the individual regular mail and later alternately by email so they could electronically sign their reports.

As technologies advanced over the years, the paper signature forms were replaced with electronic versions. Once processed, the new forms were stored in ELEC's document imaging system. The new system takes that system, and makes it ever better.

Hearing Set on Proposed Regulations

The New Jersey Election Law
Enforcement Commission (ELEC) is
proposing amendments to implement
campaign cost adjustments for
gubernatorial and non-gubernatorial
candidates, committees, and political
party entities and amendments and
new rules to implement independent
expenditure committees as part of two
proposals.

The proposals were published in the New Jersey Register on August 19, 2024. They are currently available on the Commission's website at https://www.elec.nj.gov/legalresources/reg_proposals.htm. Copies of the Commission's proposed regulatory changes may also be obtained by calling the Commission at 609-292-8700.

The Commission will hold a hearing to seek public comment about the proposed amendments on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. at:

Election Law Enforcement Commission 25 South Stockton St., 5th floor Trenton, New Jersey 08608

The Commission invites participation in this hearing and requests that any testimony be limited to no more than ten minutes.

Persons wishing to testify are requested to reserve time to speak by contacting Administrative Assistant Elbia L. Zeppetelli at (609) 292-8700, no later than Friday, October 11, 2024.

Submit written comments by October 18, 2024, to:

Benjamin Kachuriner, Asst. Legal Counsel Election Law Enforcement Commission PO Box 185 Trenton,

New Jersey 08625-0185

Email: ELEC.rulemaking@elec.nj.gov

County Party Coffers Keep Expanding Due to Larger Pool of Donors and Bigger Checks

For the first time in 17 years, county political party committees collectively raised more than \$5 million during the first half of the year, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

County parties raised nearly \$5.2 million between January and June.

Not since 2007, when they collectively raised just over \$5 million during the first six months, have the parties enjoyed such a boon.

Fund-raising and spending totals so far this year are 40 percent higher than the mid-year averages from 2014 through 2024.

TABLE 1
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY COUNTY PARTY
COMMITTEES THROUGH 2ND QUARTER BY YEAR

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATE ELECTIONS
2014	\$2,379,387	\$2,316,264	\$1,492,059	
2015	\$2,597,718	\$2,365,487	\$1,706,465	Assembly
2016	\$2,811,365	\$2,409,239	\$2,088,607	
2017	\$3,585,017	\$3,060,539	\$2,768,884	Governor and Both Houses
2018	\$2,847,179	\$2,736,142	\$2,793,340	
2019	\$3,180,991	\$3,291,234	\$3,251,147	Assembly
2020	\$1,955,019	\$2,257,696	\$2,103,422	
2021	\$2,429,408	\$2,438,694	\$3,057,443	Governor and Both Houses
2022	\$2,993,063	\$3,182,672	\$3,918,418	
2023	\$3,989,567	\$3,484,187	\$3,678,305	Senate and Assembly
2024	\$5,174,688	\$4,943,972	\$4,121,453	
Average- 2014-2024	\$3,085,764	\$2,953,284	\$2,816,322	
Difference- %	40%	40%	32%	

The \$4.1 million cash-on-hand total represented a high for the decade and exceeded the 2014-2024 average by 32 percent.

The improving fortune of county parties stems largely from enactment of the Elections Transparency Act (P.L. 2023, c.30) sixteen months ago. Also helping was an influx of funds from candidates facing federal elections this fall.

The new law doubled the regular annual contribution limit for county party committees from \$37,500 to \$75,000. In addition, the law created new "housekeeping" accounts that boosted the annual maximum contribution even higher for county parties.

A donor can give \$75,000 to accounts used directly for campaigns purposes plus another \$37,500 to the new accounts dedicated to general administrative purposes for a total of \$112,500 each year.

Housekeeping accounts are earmarked for expenses such as mortgages, rent, taxes, compliance costs, legal bills and collective bargaining outlays. Only the two state parties and the 42 county parties can create such accounts. National parties also have housekeeping accounts under federal law.

So far this year, the Gloucester County Democrat Executive Committee has received \$112,500 from a donor. Middlesex County Democratic Organization has received two \$75,000 checks while Passaic County Democratic Committee has received one \$75,000 check.

The new law also ended tight contribution caps on public contractors to party committees. Prior to enactment of the law on April 3, 2023, contractors since the mid-2000s had to keep contributions to county parties under \$300 to avoid risking the loss of public

contracts. Contractors now can give up to the \$112,500 maximum just like other contributors. During the first six months of 2024, contractors have given \$1.1 million to county parties. Half of that total has come from the following ten firms:

TABLE 2
CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTY PARTIES THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024
BY FIRMS OR MEMBERS OF LLCS WITH PUBLIC CONTRACTS¹

FIRM	AMOUNT
Remington & Vernick Engineers Inc.	\$96,900
French & Parrello Associates Inc.	\$74,600
Colliers Engineering & Design Inc	\$74,350
Member of Eric M Bernstein & Associates LLC	\$62,500
T & M Associates	\$57,050
Business & Governmental Insurance Agency Inc	\$55,000
Richard A. Alaimo Companies ²	\$47,300
Members of McManimon, Scotland & Baumann, LLC	\$31,250
Boswell Engineering Inc	\$31,000
R&M Engineering Inc	\$30,000

The list includes seven engineering businesses, two law firms and one insurance agency.

Public contractors so far are providing 23 percent- nearly one in four dollars- of the funds received by county party committees.

During the first year of the new law in 2023, county parties raised more than \$1.4 million from public contractors, according to an ELEC analysis. It represented about 11 percent of total fund-raising.

While the infusion of contractor funds clearly is pumping up county party coffers, it remains well below the record \$6.1 million contractors gave to county parties in 2003. County parties also raised a record annual total of \$27.2 million that year.

In addition to benefiting from the 2023 legislative changes, county parties are receiving a windfall of funds from candidates vying this year for one U.S. Senate seat and all 12 House of Representatives seats.

House candidates have contributed \$156,134 through June 30, while U.S. Senate candidates have given \$61,720.

From an overall standpoint, Democrats have raised and spent nearly twice as much as Republicans and have more than triple the amount of cash in the bank.

TABLE 3
SECOND QUARTER SNAPSHOT OF 2024 CAMPAIGN
FINANCE ACTIVITY BY COUNTY PARTIES

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Democrats	\$3,837,988	\$3,640,477	\$3,193,362	\$2,904,330
Republicans	\$1,336,700	\$1,303,494	\$ 928,091	\$1,336,352
Combined	\$5,174,688	\$4,943,972	\$4,121,453	\$4,240,682

^{*}Cash-on-hand plus or minus debts owed to or by the committee.

¹ Listed firms in previous years have filed annual reports with ELEC disclosing public contracts. Limited liability companies (LLCs) cannot make direct contributions but individuals who are members can write checks that draw on LLC accounts.

² Richard A. Alaimo Associates, Alaimo Group, and Richard A. Alaimo Association of Engineers.

Among Democratic county party committees that have filed their reports, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Somerset and Union Counties all reported cash balances of more than \$100,000. Hudson County reported a negative cash balance when adjusting for outstanding debts.

TABLE 4
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF
DEMOCRATIC COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 37,322	\$ 29,336	\$ 10,334	\$ 10,334
Bergen	\$ 773,327	\$ 267,828	\$ 830,939	\$ 830,939
Burlington	\$ 132,300	\$ 30,778	\$ 156,116	\$ 149,741
Camden	\$ 213,273	\$ 324,925	\$ 170,661	\$ 44,513
Cape May	\$ 24,096	\$ 13,631	\$ 28,169	\$ 28,169
Cumberland	\$ 28,140	\$ 17,140	\$ 29,650	\$ 29,650
Essex	\$ 387,095	\$ 366,048	\$ 270,479	\$ 270,479
Gloucester	\$ 231,537	\$ 116,381	\$ 328,289	\$ 309,937
Hudson	\$ 123,175	\$ 115,397	\$ 36,373	\$ (116,476)
Hunterdon	\$ 14,600	\$ 33,760	\$ 6,882	\$ 6,882
Mercer	\$ 29,010	\$ 24,000	\$ 345,726	\$ 345,148
Middlesex	\$ 621,511	\$ 911,066	\$ 69,063	\$ 69,063
Monmouth	\$ 97,062	\$ 97,389	\$ 5,536	\$ 5,536
Morris	\$ 77,350	\$ 80,724	\$ 54,814	\$ 54,813
Ocean	\$ 17,496	\$ 11,452	\$ 42,792	\$ 58,959
Passaic	\$ 649,765	\$ 794,794	\$ 97,856	\$ 97,856
Salem	\$ 21,098	\$ 41,481	\$ 46,281	\$ 46,281
Somerset	\$ 148,016	\$ 168,828	\$ 206,632	\$ 206,632
Sussex	\$ 2,953	\$ 8,501	\$ 33,461	\$ 33,461
Union	\$ 205,898	\$ 185,599	\$ 419,943	\$ 419,943
Warren**	\$ 2,965	\$ 1,417	\$ 3,365	\$ 2,469
Democrats-Total	\$ 3,837,988	\$ 3,640,477	\$3,193,362	\$ 2,904,330

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

^{**} First quarter totals.

Among Republican county party committees that have filed their reports, Cape May County reported a cash balance above \$100,000. Hudson had negative balance while Somerset County reported it would have a negative balance if it paid off its outstanding debts.

TABLE 5
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF
REPUBLICAN COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 95,480	\$ 73,277	\$ 97,936	\$ 97,936
Bergen	\$ 64,951	\$ 61,084	\$ 14,995	\$ 4,994
Burlington	\$ 21,836	\$ 28,162	\$ 10,685	\$ 520,100
Camden	\$ 17,892	\$ 24,691	\$ 1,326	\$ 1,295
Cape May	\$ 131,834	\$ 90,469	\$409,101	\$ 409,101
Cumberland	\$ 60,210	\$ 28,671	\$ 73,828	\$ 73,828
Essex	\$ 10,000	\$ 7,503	\$ 5,307	\$ 5,307
Gloucester	\$ 25,715	\$ 35,384	\$ 2,038	\$ 2,038
Hudson**	\$ 0	\$ 725	(\$ 725)	(\$ 725)
Hunterdon	\$ 74,489	\$ 67,597	\$ 17,351	\$ 7,351
Mercer	\$ 1,700	\$ 3,156	\$ 6,240	\$ 6,240
Middlesex	\$ 60,117	\$ 28,766	\$ 51,684	\$ 51,556
Monmouth	\$ 102,146	\$ 144,405	\$ 65,669	\$ 65,669
Morris	\$ 61,709	\$ 76,682	\$ 8,295	\$ 3,095
Ocean	\$ 305,631	\$ 299,973	\$ 15,882	\$ 15,882
Passaic	\$ 134,220	\$ 112,725	\$ 40,428	\$ 13,659
Salem	\$ 38,025	\$ 12,512	\$ 64,022	\$ 64,022
Somerset	\$ 23,555	\$ 41,500	\$ 1,183	(\$ 47,571)
Sussex**	\$ 11,645	\$ 8,821	\$ 14,161	\$ 13,890
Union	\$ 32,120	\$ 88,215	\$ 366	\$ 366
Warren	\$ 63,426	\$ 69,177	\$ 28,320	\$ 28,320
Republicans-Total	\$1,336,700	\$1,303,494	\$928,091	\$1,336,352

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

Totals contained in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon August 19, 2024. 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.nj.gov).

^{**} First quarter totals.

	INCLUSION DATES	REPORT DUE DATE
FIRE COMMISSIONER – FEBRUARY 17, 2024	<u> </u>	
29–day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 01/16/2024	01/19/2024
11–day Preelection Reporting Date	01/17/2024 - 02/03/2024	02/06/2024
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	02/04/2024 - 03/05/2024	03/08/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 02/04/2024 through	02/09/2024	
24–Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 02/10/2024 through	02/17/2024	
APRIL SCHOOL BOARD – APRIL 16, 2024		
29–day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* - 03/15/2024	03/18/2024
11–day Preelection Reporting Date	03/16/2024 - 04/02/2024	04/05/2024
20-Day Postelection Reporting Date	04/03/2024 – 05/03/2024	05/06/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 04/03/2024 through	04/08/2024	
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 04/09/2024 through	04/16/2024	
MAY MUNICIPAL – MAY 14, 2024		
29–day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* – 04/12/2024	04/15/2024
11–day Preelection Reporting Date	04/13/2024 – 04/30/2024	05/03/2024
20–Day Postelection Reporting Date	05/01/2024 – 05/30/2024	06/03/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/01/2024 through	05/06/2024	
24–Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/07/2024 through	05/14/2024	
RUNOFF (JUNE)** – JUNE 11, 2024		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	No Report Required for this Period	
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	05/01/2024 – 05/28/2024	05/31/2024
20-Day Postelection Reporting Date	05/29/2024 – 06/28/2024	07/01/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/29/2024 through	06/03/2024	
24–Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 06/04/2024 through	06/11/2024	
PRIMARY (90 DAY START DATE: MARCH 06, 2024)*** – J	UNE 04, 2024	
29–day Preelection Reporting Date	Inception of campaign* – 05/03/2024	05/06/2024
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	05/04/2024 -05/21/2024	05/24/2024
20-Day Postelection Reporting Date	05/22/2024 – 06/21/2024	06/24/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/22/2024 through	05/27/2024	
24–Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 05/28/2024 through	06/04/2024	
GENERAL (90 DAY START DATE: AUGUST 07, 2024)*** –	NOVEMBER 05, 2024	
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	06/22/2024 – 10/04/2024	10/07/2024
11–day Preelection Reporting Date	10/05/2024 – 10/22/2024	10/25/2024
	10/23/2024 -11/22/2024	11/25/2024
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	10/25/2024 11/22/2024	, -, -

RUN-OFF (DECEMBER)** - DECEMBER 03, 2024		
29-day Preelection Reporting Date	No Report Required for this Period	
11-day Preelection Reporting Date	10/23/2024 – 11/19/2024	11/22/2024
20-day Postelection Reporting Date	11/20/2024 – 12/20/2024	12/23/2024
72-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 11/20/2024 through 11/25/2024		
24-Hour Notice Reporting Starts on 11/26/2024 through 12/03/2024		
PACS, PCFRS & CAMPAIGN QUARTERLY FILERS		
1 st Quarter	01/01/2024 - 03/31/2024	04/15/2024
2 nd Quarter	04/01/2024 - 06/30/2024	07/15/2024
3 rd Quarter	07/1/2024 – 09/30/2024	10/15/2024
4 th Quarter	10/01/2024 – 12/31/2024	01/15/2025
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AGENTS (Q-4)		
1 st Quarter	01/01/2024 - 03/31/2024	04/10/2024
2 nd Quarter	04/01/2024 – 06/30/2024	07/10/2024
3 rd Quarter	07/01/2024 - 09/30/2024	10/10/2024
4 th Quarter	10/01/2024 – 12/31/2024	01/10/2025

- * Inception Date of Campaign (first time filers) or from January 1, 2024 (Quarterly filers).
- ** A candidate committee or joint candidates committee that is filing in a 2024 Runoff election is not required to file a 20-day postelection report for the corresponding prior election (May Municipal or General).
- *** Form PFD-1 is due on April 04, 2024 for Primary Election Candidates and June 14, 2024 for Independent General Election Candidates.

Note: A 4th quarter 2023 filing is needed for Primary 2024 candidates if they started their campaign prior to December 06, 2023. A 2nd quarter 2024 filing is needed by Independent/Non-Partisan General Election candidates if they started their campaign prior to May 07, 2024.

HOW TO CONTACT ELEC

www.elec.nj.gov

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