



NEWS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

According to a report by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, fundraising in the 2007 legislative contest increased at a much slower pace than in previous elections.

Jeff Brindle, deputy director of the Commission and author of the study, said that pay-to-play reform appears to have “impacted fundraising” and “altered the flow of money to legislative candidates.”

“The 1993 campaign finance reforms brought about a new age of political party dominance that peaked in 2003,” added Brindle. “Now with pay-to-play reform that dominance is weakening.”

He said that the rate of increase in legislative fundraising has decreased and that the contributor base from which Senate and Assembly candidates derive their money has changed.

Between the legislative general election of 2003 and 2007, fundraising increased by five percent. Though setting a record at \$50.4 million raised, this rate of increase over four years before was much less than between previous election cycles. Between 2001 and 2003, fundraising rose by 35 percent and between 1997 and 2001 by 32 percent.

White Paper Number 20, Legislative General Elections 2007: An Analysis of Trends in State Senate and Assembly Elections, shows that contributor patterns have changed as well.

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Previous Commission reports had political party entities constituting two-thirds of legislative receipts in elections following the 1993 reforms. Now, in the wake of pay-to-play, that percentage has declined to 51 percent.

State and county political party committees and legislative leadership committees are responsible for the reduction, according to the report. Compared with 2003, when political parties and legislative leadership committees each made 25 percent of contributions, these entities made 14 percent and 18 percent of 2007 legislative receipts, respectively.

“Conversely,” said Brindle, “contributions from candidate committees reached 19 percent of the total in 2007, up from 12 percent in 2003. Moreover, special interest PAC contributions rose to 16 percent of receipts up from 13 percent in 2003 and contributions from businesses declined to just six percent of the total down from 11 percent in 2003.”

The report concluded that pay-to-play reform is responsible for the changing contributor base.

Brindle said that “as the result of a very comprehensive pay-to-play law, contributions are coming from sources least affected by the reforms and less so from sources impacted by them.”

“ELEC has been analyzing trends in campaign financing over several decades,” said Brindle. “What is clear is that reforms enacted throughout this period have caused distinct changes in the electoral process as it pertains to campaign financing, one way or the other.”

The latest white paper is available by contacting the Election Law Enforcement Commission or accessing its website at <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/>.

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