



NEWS RELEASE

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:
June 29, 2016

Contributors can give a maximum of \$4,300 per election to 2017 gubernatorial candidates under new inflation-adjusted limits and thresholds established by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

Also under the changes required by law every four years, gubernatorial candidates who qualify for public funding can spend a maximum of \$6.4 million in primary elections, and \$13.8 million in general elections.

They can receive up to \$4 million in public funds during the primary election, and \$9.3 million during the general election, under the Gubernatorial Public Financing Program that began in 1977.

The following chart shows the adjusted limits and thresholds under the Gubernatorial Public Financing Program. The adjustments apply to 2017 gubernatorial campaigns already underway (one person so far has declared his candidacy for the 2017 primary), or any candidates who declare later for the 2017 election.

Table 1
2017 Gubernatorial Cost Index Adjustments

Limit/Threshold	2013 Amount	2017 Amount
Contribution Limit	\$ 3,800	\$ 4,300
Qualification Threshold	\$ 380,000	\$ 430,000
Amount Not Matched	\$ 122,000	\$ 138,000
Primary Public Fund Cap	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 4,000,000
Primary Expenditure Limit	\$ 5,600,000	\$ 6,400,000
General Public Fund Cap	\$ 8,200,000	\$ 9,300,000
General Expenditure Limit	\$ 12,200,000	\$ 13,800,000

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Located at: 28 W. State Street, 13th Floor, Trenton, New Jersey

Executive Director Jeffrey Brindle said the Gubernatorial Public Financing Program has been a model for similar programs around the nation.

“Since its inception, 69 candidates have received \$117 million in public matching funds,” he said. “A public investment of just \$5.00 per vote cast has resulted in gubernatorial elections that have been issue-oriented and scandal-free.”

He added that the program has enabled three Democrats and three Republicans to win the office of Governor, and, in some cases, helped them win reelection.

“New Jersey’s nationally renowned public financing program is intended to help persons of limited financial means seek election to the state’s highest office,” Brindle said. “Another big benefit for candidates is that it greatly reduces the time they must spend calling contributors, and enables them to spend more time reaching out to voters.”

Brindle said public financing is more important than ever with candidates facing a growing onslaught of independent special interest spending. “Especially with inflation adjustments, the public financing program equips candidates with sufficient funding to wage serious campaigns,” he said. “If they are attacked by a shadow group, they will have enough funds to respond.”

One reason for the program’s success, he said, is that limits and thresholds are adjusted every four years for inflation. These statutory changes are required by the Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act.

In making the adjustments, New Jersey is believed to be the only state that makes the cost of advertising a major part of its inflation formula.

“Largely due to the ever-rising cost of advertising, candidates and committees face more pressure from inflation than the general public,” said Brindle, who developed the formula used for adjusting limits and thresholds. “We believe New Jersey’s approach, set forth in the statute, offers better protection against inflation than just using the general consumer price index.”

Revised fines and reporting thresholds for non-gubernatorial candidates are listed on the following page. They apply to any candidates or committees organized to take part in 2017 elections.

Table 2
2017 Adjustments for Non-Gubernatorial Candidates and Committees

Reporting Thresholds and Fines	2013 Amount	2017 Amount
Political Committee Reporting Threshold	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,800
CPC Reporting Threshold	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,300
Contribution Reporting Threshold (P.L. 2004, c.28)*	\$ 300	\$ 300
48-hr Notice Contribution Threshold	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
48-hr Notice Expenditure Threshold	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
JCC Thresholds - 2 candidates	\$ 8,500	\$ 9,700
JCC - 3 or more candidates	\$ 12,300	\$ 14,000
Form A-3 Threshold	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,300
Form A-1 & School Board/Write-in Threshold	\$ 4,500	\$ 5,100
Independent Expenditure Threshold	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
Section 20.1 Penalties (P.L. 2004, c.32)		
First Time	\$ 7,600	\$ 8,600
Subsequent	\$ 15,200	\$ 17,200
Section 22 Penalties (P.L. 2004, c.32)		
First Time	\$ 7,600	\$ 8,600
Subsequent	\$ 15,200	\$ 17,200
Pro Rata Return of Contributions**	\$ 300	\$ 300

*Frozen at \$300 pursuant to P.L. 2004, c.28.

**Frozen by regulation to conform to contribution reporting threshold pursuant to P.L. 2004, c.28.

Contribution limits for non-gubernatorial candidates are not adjusted automatically. In fact, they have been frozen at the same amounts since 2005.

The law requires that by July 1st each year, the Commission must issue a report that includes recommended increases in contribution limits for non-gubernatorial candidates. The report must be transmitted to the Legislature by July 15th. The Legislature then decides whether to enact legislation accepting these revisions. Recently introduced bills are pending in both houses that would do so.

The recommended 2017 non-gubernatorial contribution limit adjustments are displayed below. The Commission derived the 2017 recommended amounts by applying the cost multiplier to the contribution levels from 2005, the last year when adjustments were made.

Table 3
Recommended 2017 Non-Gubernatorial Contribution Amount Adjustments

2005 Contribution Limit	2017 Contribution Limit
\$ 2,600	\$ 3,000
\$ 7,200	\$ 8,200
\$ 8,200	\$ 9,300
\$ 25,000	\$ 29,000
\$ 37,000	\$ 42,000
\$ 72,000	\$ 82,000

A copy of the “2017 Cost Index Report” is available at ELEC’s website (www.elec.state.nj.us/pdf/files/publicfinancedocs/CostIndex_2017.pdf).