



# NEWS RELEASE

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Direct and indirect spending on the 2017 gubernatorial primary election set a new record of \$43.1 million†† based on the most recent reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Reports due 20 days after the June 6 primary election showed that candidates spent \$34 million† while independent committees, mostly in 2016, spent \$9.1 million††.

“The combined total of \$43.1†† million tops the 2001 election, which when adjusted for inflation cost \$41.2 million. That was previously the most expensive gubernatorial primary,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director.

Among candidates, Democratic nominee Phil Murphy surpassed all contenders, spending \$21.7 million, or 64 percent of funds spent by candidates. Much of his primary campaign was self-financed, although Murphy has said he intends to apply for public matching funds in the general election and thereby limit his overall spending to \$13.8 million.

**TABLE 1  
PRIMARY CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF GUBERNATORIAL  
CANDIDATES THROUGH JUNE 23, 2017  
(RANKED BY SPENDING)**

Candidate	Party	Raised	Spent	Cash On Hand
Murphy, Phil	D	\$21,995,248	\$21,735,597	\$262,951
Guadagno, Kimberly	R	\$ 3,540,927	\$ 3,451,743	\$ 89,184
Johnson, James	D	\$ 3,256,514	\$ 3,198,226	\$ 58,288
Wisniewski, John	D	\$ 2,142,139	\$ 2,081,439	\$ 60,795
Ciattarelli, Jack	R	\$ 1,768,417	\$ 1,731,962	\$ 36,337
Singh, Hirsh	R	\$ 1,021,387	\$ 1,016,191	\$ 5,196
Lesniak, Ray	D	\$ 791,368†	\$ 718,619†	\$ 64,990†
Zinna, Mark	D	\$ 33,498†	\$ 32,622†	\$ 877†
Rogers, Steven	R	\$ 27,522	\$ 27,522	\$ 0
Brennan, Bill	D	\$ 20,847†	\$ 20,847†	\$ 0†
Rullo, Joseph	R	\$ 13,573	\$ 9,809	\$ 64
<b>TOTAL- PRIMARY CANDIDATES</b>		\$34,611,440†	\$34,024,577†	\$578,682†
<b>TOTAL- INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES</b>		\$13,926,224††	\$ 9,123,331††	NA
<b>TOTAL- CANDIDATES AND INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES</b>		\$48,537,664††	\$43,147,908††	NA

Lt. Governor Kimberly Guadagno, the Republican primary winner, was the second biggest spender. She spent \$3.4 million on the primary, which except for Murphy topped all other Democrats and Republicans.

Looking solely at candidate spending, the \$34 million† is surpassed by the 2005 campaign. That primary cost \$28 million, or \$35.7 million when adjusted for inflation.

One common denominator is that the two campaigns featured extensive self-financing by some candidates. Murphy’s latest report lists \$16.3 million in self-funding for his primary election. He spent another \$4.9 million prior to declaring his candidacy on two non-profit groups that promoted issues he supports.

Just three other New Jersey candidates have spent more than Murphy’s combined outlay of \$21 million pursuing state or federal offices (following numbers inflation adjusted)- Jon Corzine (\$166 million), Steve Forbes (\$110 million) and Doug Forrester (\$46.5 million).

Other candidates in the 2017 primary also tapped their personal or family wealth to a lesser extent, including Hirsh Singh (\$950,000 with \$290,000 repaid), state Sen. Raymond Lesniak (\$520,000† to candidate fund plus \$15,000 to affiliated Super PAC), Assemblyman John Wisniewski (\$30,000)†, Jim Johnson (\$20,000 to affiliated non-profit prior to candidacy), Guadagno (\$5,700 that was repaid), Mark Zinna (\$1,400)† and Ciattarelli (\$1,000).

Brindle said he sees an important parallel between the 2001 and 2017 primaries.

“What is interesting is that both elections featured heavy use of ostensibly independent committees by candidates or their supporters prior to formal declarations of candidacies. This is a growing trend in state and national politics and, absent legislation that bans such spending, is likely to continue,” he said.

Brindle added that he “expects spending by outside, independent groups to be extensive in the general election for governor and the legislature.”

**Table 2**  
**SPENDING BY INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES**  
**RELATED TO GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN**  
**(RANKED BY SPENDING)**

<b>Formed By, Affiliated With or Supports</b>	<b>Independent Committees</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Spent</b>
Murphy, Phil	New Way For New Jersey	\$ 3,911,842	\$ 3,810,811
Murphy, Phil	New Start NJ	\$ 2,439,750††	\$ 2,277,138††
Fulop, Steve *	Coalition For Progress	\$ 4,278,456	\$ 1,037,268
Lesniak, Ray	Committee For Economic Growth And Social Justice	\$ 683,661	\$ 683,581
Sweeney, Stephen *	New Jerseyans For A Better Tomorrow	\$ 1,847,785†	\$ 627,683†
Guadagno, Kimberly	Building A Better New Jersey Together	\$ 405,455	\$ 362,952††
Lesniak, Ray	Run Ray Run	\$ 164,815	\$ 148,164
Murphy, Phil	NJ League of Conservation Voters Victory Fund	\$ 140,000	\$ 124,553
Johnson, James	NJ Prepared To Vote	\$ 54,460	\$ 51,181
Democrats	Our New Jersey (Democratic Governors Association)**	\$ 0	\$ 0
	<b>Total- Independent Committees</b>	<b>\$13,926,224††</b>	<b>\$ 9,123,371††</b>

\*Fulop said 9/28/16 he would not run for governor. Sweeney withdrew his name on 10/6/16. \*\*Has registered for gubernatorial election.

Information in this press release was based on reports filed by noon on June 27, 2017. Reports filed by gubernatorial candidates are available online on ELEC’s website at [www.elec.state.nj.us](http://www.elec.state.nj.us). ELEC also can be accessed on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw](http://www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/electnj](http://www.twitter.com/electnj)).