



NEWS RELEASE

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A one-time outlay related to the gubernatorial inaugural pushed first quarter fund-raising and spending for “Big Six” committees to a decade-long high, according to disclosure reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Reports filed by the two state parties and four legislative leadership committees show they jointly raised \$1.9 million for the three months ending March 31, 2018. They spent \$1.8 million during the same period.

“This spike in campaign finance activity was unusual. The Big Six committees typically are tapped out after a big election year,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. New Jersey in 2017 elected a new governor and filled all 120 legislative seats.

TABLE 1
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY “BIG SIX”
AT END OF 1ST QUARTER BY YEAR

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH	STATE ELECTIONS
2007	\$1,667,146	\$ 880,509	\$5,365,847	\$5,181,835	Senate and Assembly
2008	\$1,799,469	\$1,010,346	\$1,166,446	\$ 180,217	
2009	\$1,741,580	\$ 754,923	\$2,844,159	\$2,649,177	Governor and Assembly
2010	\$ 885,123	\$ 694,309	\$1,474,272	\$1,290,437	
2011	\$1,738,239	\$ 777,847	\$2,500,926	\$2,191,738	Senate and Assembly
2012	\$1,293,649	\$1,617,192	\$ 704,601	\$ 503,541	
2013	\$1,464,033	\$ 583,756	\$2,564,802	\$2,421,411	Governor and Both Houses
2014	\$ 600,526	\$ 694,221	\$ 750,904	\$ 443,050	
2015	\$ 973,494	\$1,017,051	\$1,623,550	\$ 994,137	Assembly
2016	\$ 673,048	\$ 555,175	\$1,097,091	\$ 415,590	
2017	\$1,076,186	\$ 544,948	\$2,198,343	\$2,064,647	Governor and Both Houses
2018	\$1,902,503	\$1,832,307	\$ 814,754	\$ 730,251	

Brindle said the main reason for the surge was that the Democratic State Committee raised and spent \$990,000 on Democratic Governor Phil Murphy’s January 16, 2018 inaugural. A 2005 Commission advisory opinion permitted state parties to help pay for inaugurals.

Former Governor Chris Christie, who served two terms, didn’t use his state party to raise funds for his two inaugurals. The Democratic State Committee contributed \$250,000 directly to Governor Jon Corzine’s inaugural in 2006 and indirectly spent another \$40,704, its quarterly report shows.

“If you subtract the \$1 million spent on the inaugural, combined spending would have been closer to the much smaller quarterly total four years ago after the 2013 election,” Brindle said.

Due largely to its inaugural outlay, the Democratic State Committee spent nearly \$1.4 million during the quarter. The other five committees spent a combined total of \$444,545.

One sign of how busy Democratic state party members were during the post-election quarter- they received 27 checks worth \$25,000 each, the annual maximum per donor for a Big Six committee. The five other committees together received just five \$25,000 checks.

**TABLE 2
FUNDRAISING BY “BIG SIX” COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2018**

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$ 85,065	\$ 90,860	\$ 96,994	\$ 96,994
Senate Republican Majority	\$ 48,000	\$ 67,708	\$ 47,477	\$ 47,477
Assembly Republican Victory	\$ 64,100	\$ 48,341	\$106,078	\$106,078
Sub-Total- Republicans	\$ 197,165	\$ 206,909	\$250,549	\$250,549
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$1,459,997	\$1,387,762	\$458,431	\$424,367
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 50,298	\$ 60,579	\$ 60,926	\$ 40,926
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$ 195,043	\$ 177,057	\$ 44,848	\$ 14,409
Sub-Total- Democrats	\$1,705,338	\$1,625,398	\$564,205	\$479,702
Total- Both Parties	\$1,902,503	\$1,832,307	\$814,754	\$730,251

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

**Some spending totals exceed fundraising totals because the committee dipped into reserve or incurred debt.

“One decent quarter can’t mask the fact that overall party fundraising and spending has declined sharply since the early 2000s,” said Brindle. “We continue to hope the legislature and governor will support ELEC-recommended legislation that would try to reverse this slide.”

“Reinvigorating parties is important because party committees are more accountable and transparent than many of the independent groups that now dominate state and national elections,” he said.

ELEC recommendations include streamlining so-called “pay-to-play” contribution restrictions by adopting a single law, letting public contractors make larger contributions to parties though with full disclosure, raising contribution limits that apply to other contributors to offset inflation, and making independent special interest groups abide by the same disclosure laws as parties and candidates.

State parties and legislative leadership committees are required to report their financial activity to the Commission on a quarterly basis. The reports are available on ELEC’s website at www.elec.state.nj.us. ELEC also can be accessed on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/elecnj).