



NEWS RELEASE

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CASH BONANZA FROM FEDERAL COMMITTEES PUMPS UP COUNTY PARTIES

County parties combined are having their best fund-raising success during a federal election year in about a decade, according to the latest reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

With congressional candidate committees sending them scores of checks worth more than \$1 million to help with next Tuesday's election, county parties collectively reported raising \$5.8 million through September 30, 2018.

The fundraising total is more than any even-numbered year dating back to 2008. Even-numbered years are dominated by federal elections, while odd-numbered years feature statewide elections for the governor's seat and/or the state legislature. At this point last year, when there were state elections, county parties had raised \$6.6 million.

Table 1
County Party Fundraising and Spending
through Third Quarter 2008-2018

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATE OR FEDERAL	STATEWIDE ELECTION
2008	\$5,517,282	\$5,078,682	\$2,400,031	Federal	P/S/H
2009	\$7,398,692	\$6,375,763	\$2,952,853	State	G/A
2010	\$4,526,290	\$4,393,487	\$2,365,419	Federal	H
2011	\$4,798,299	\$3,694,423	\$2,134,219	State	S/A
2012	\$3,662,456	\$3,189,326	\$1,573,648	Federal	P/S/H
2013	\$5,319,655	\$4,447,403	\$2,456,395	State	G/S/A
2014	\$4,410,348	\$3,764,798	\$1,980,600	Federal	S/H
2015	\$4,843,498	\$4,176,856	\$2,123,801	State	A
2016	\$4,199,012	\$3,625,063	\$2,328,583	Federal	P/H
2017	\$6,661,677	\$5,527,347	\$3,266,399	State	G/S/A
2018	\$5,769,747	\$4,793,929	\$3,571,919	Federal	S/H

P=Presidential; S=US or State Senate; H=House; G=Gubernatorial; A=Assembly

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“Republican county committees have prospered the most this year from contributions by federal candidates,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “So far, Republicans have taken in nearly a third of their funds from federal candidates. Democrats have received about \$1 out of \$19 from federal candidates.”

Table 2
Donations by Congressional Candidates to County Parties

YEAR	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	TOTAL
2018	\$156,400	\$868,910	\$1,025,310
2017	\$ 69,850	\$117,500	\$ 187,350
2016	\$203,821	\$122,463	\$ 326,284

The GOP’s big benefactor is Republican US Senate Candidate Bob Hugin. He is a former business executive who already has spent \$36 million of his personal wealth on his bid to oust incumbent Democratic US Senator Bob Menendez, according to Federal Election Commission filings.

Hugin has sent \$37,000 checks to all 21 Republican county committees while also reimbursing them for some rental payments, bringing his total county party payout so far to \$788,310.

Hugin joins three other wealthy candidates- two Democrats and one Republican- who have been generous to county party committees during runs for US Senate or Governor since 1999.

Table 3
Contributions by US Senate or Gubernatorial Candidates to County Parties Since 1999

CANDIDATE	TOTAL	PARTY	WHEN	OUTCOME
Bob Hugin	\$ 798,310	Republican	2018	Pending
Phil Murphy	\$ 722,957	Democrat	2014-2017	Won Governor
Doug Forrester	\$ 326,105	Republican	2002-2005	Lost US Senate Seat and Governor
Jon Corzine	\$4,759,820	Democrat	1999-2008	Won US Senate Seat and Governor; Lost Governor

Brindle said both parties have enjoyed an advantage during elections when they had wealthy party members run for office who could afford to financially support their efforts to get-out-the-vote and other election activities.

“As we are seeing this year and previous ones, self-financed candidates can reinvigorate their entire party network,” he said, noting that the four candidates listed in Table 3 aided state party coffers as well.

“Candidates besides those who self-finance also share the cost of elections with their parties,” Brindle said. “With polls showing competitive campaigns for this year’s US Senate seat and some congressional spots, it is no shock that county parties are receiving a windfall from federal contenders who need their help.”

Even though Republicans have gotten more than five times the money from federal candidates, Democrats still have raised and spent more than Republicans this year, and report a larger cash reserve.

Democrats last year received big checks from the Democratic Governors Association and national union affiliates to help with the gubernatorial election. Their nearly two-to-one cash-on-hand edge suggests they held onto some of that money for this year’s elections.

Courtesy of this year’s windfall, Republicans do show a 62 percent jump in fundraising since four years ago versus 11 percent for Democrats. The \$2.8 million raised through three quarters by the GOP is the most in more than a decade.

While Democrats have raised \$3 million so far in 2018, the total is eclipsed by the \$4.7 million they raised last year through three quarters.

Table 4
Summary of Campaign Finance Activity by County Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2018 Versus 2014

	RAISED-2018	SPENT-2018	CASH-ON-HAND-2018	NET WORTH-2018*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$3,008,015	\$2,764,522	\$2,308,278	\$2,127,090
Republican County Party Committees	\$2,761,732	\$2,029,407	\$1,263,642	\$1,801,799
Total-Both Parties	\$5,769,747	\$4,793,929	\$3,571,919	\$3,928,889
	RAISED-2014	SPENT-2014	CASH-ON-HAND-2014	NET WORTH-2014*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$2,705,414	\$2,310,919	\$1,265,988	\$ 899,727
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,704,934	\$1,453,880	\$ 714,612	\$1,548,634
Total-Both Parties	\$4,410,348	\$3,764,798	\$1,980,600	\$2,448,361
Difference 2018 versus 2014				
Democratic County Party Committees	11%	20%	82%	136%
Republican County Party Committees	62%	40%	77%	16%
Total-Both Parties	31%	27%	80%	60%

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

While county party fundraising in 2018 is good for a federal election year, it remains well below totals before 2005 when tight limits on contributions by public contractors had not yet kicked in, and spending by independent special interest groups had not yet exploded due to federal court rulings.

Brindle said legislation recommended by ELEC could make it easier for state and county parties to raise money while shifting funds away from independent groups that dominate federal, state and even local elections. Parties are far more transparent and accountable than many independent groups.

“Since both parties have introduced legislation that incorporate most of ELEC’s recommendations, we remain hopeful that action soon will be taken on our suggested reforms,” Brindle said.

Among Democratic county party committees, Camden, Gloucester, Passaic and Union all reported more than \$100,000 cash-on-hand. Burlington and Hudson Counties reported a negative net worth, meaning they owe more than their cash reserves.

Table 5
Campaign Finance Activity of
Democratic County Party Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2018

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 42,570	\$ 40,029	\$ 11,916	\$ 11,916
Bergen	\$ 395,773	\$ 333,425	\$ 70,217	\$ 29,585
Burlington	\$ 29,986	\$ 42,525	\$ 11,156	\$ (6,422)
Camden	\$ 379,085	\$ 227,029	\$ 501,060	\$ 501,060
Cape May	\$ 73,051	\$ 73,138	\$ 1,439	\$ 1,439
Cumberland	\$ 24,182	\$ 48,298	\$ 8,531	\$ 8,531
Essex	\$ 219,803	\$ 256,045	\$ 89,088	\$ 89,088
Gloucester	\$ 260,105	\$ 149,984	\$ 433,202	\$ 433,202
Hudson	\$ 77,675	\$ 172,775	\$ 49,725	\$ (89,419)
Hunterdon	\$ 48,237	\$ 48,719	\$ 18,506	\$ 18,506
Mercer	\$ 1,316	\$ 38,155	\$ 86,846	\$ 86,846
Middlesex	\$ 424,928	\$ 457,429	\$ 7,063	\$ 7,063
Monmouth	\$ 201,853	\$ 177,950	\$ 32,620	\$ 32,620
Morris***	\$ 78,615	\$ 70,332	\$ 18,577	\$ 18,577
Ocean	\$ 27,686	\$ 59,301	\$ 36,121	\$ 52,288
Passaic	\$ 346,306	\$ 243,882	\$ 630,728	\$ 630,728
Salem***	\$ 3,911	\$ 3,000	\$ 96,855	\$ 96,855
Somerset	\$ 64,255	\$ 64,877	\$ 35,417	\$ 35,417
Sussex	\$ 60,422	\$ 24,459	\$ 42,288	\$ 42,288
Union	\$ 246,902	\$ 232,288	\$ 126,398	\$ 126,398
Warren**	\$ 1,353	\$ 883	\$ 524	\$ 524
Democrats-Total	\$3,008,015	\$2,764,522	\$2,308,278	\$2,127,090

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

**First quarter totals.

***Second quarter totals.

Among Republican county committees that filed their reports, Passaic, Salem and Somerset Counties reported cash-on-hand totals above \$100,000.

Table 6
Campaign Finance Activity of
Republican County Party Committees
January 1 through September 30, 2018

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 46,774	\$ 18,008	\$ 51,166	\$ 51,166
Bergen	\$ 137,382	\$ 82,931	\$ 61,788	\$ 61,788
Burlington	\$ 788,014	\$ 793,084	\$ 32,542	\$ 581,207
Camden	\$ 37,250	\$ 24,027	\$ 39,181	\$ 39,181
Cape May	\$ 162,105	\$ 108,634	\$ 61,168	\$ 61,168
Cumberland	\$ 91,984	\$ 43,912	\$ 62,611	\$ 62,611
Essex	\$ 55,500	\$ 27,514	\$ 31,233	\$ 31,233
Gloucester	\$ 45,911	\$ 20,759	\$ 33,490	\$ 33,490
Hudson	\$ 37,000†	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 60,423	\$ 44,453	\$ 24,518	\$ 24,518
Mercer	\$ 46,880	\$ 22,623	\$ 45,684	\$ 45,684
Middlesex	\$ 62,935	\$ 41,682	\$ 31,642	\$ 31,642
Monmouth	\$ 196,056	\$ 152,447	\$ 77,379	\$ 73,996
Morris	\$ 162,119	\$ 140,092	\$ 30,412	\$ 31,692
Ocean	\$ 145,703	\$ 117,447	\$ 30,565	\$ 30,565
Passaic	\$ 173,774	\$ 60,575	\$ 113,199	\$ 113,199
Salem	\$ 58,976	\$ 45,457	\$ 236,684	\$ 236,684
Somerset	\$ 233,921	\$ 138,223	\$ 137,532	\$ 138,222
Sussex	\$ 70,015	\$ 47,645	\$ 56,717	\$ 56,717
Union	\$ 82,550	\$ 54,309	\$ 70,923	\$ 70,923
Warren	\$ 66,460	\$ 45,586	\$ 35,208	\$ 26,114
Republicans-Total	\$2,761,732	\$2,029,407	\$1,263,642	\$1,801,799

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

†Reported by US Senate Candidate Bob Hugin.

NA= No reports available.

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon October 31, 2018. 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.state.nj.us).

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