



# NEWS RELEASE

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## COUNTY PARTY FUND-RAISING FLAT THOUGH SPENDING UP VERSUS 2015

Combined fund-raising by county political parties through September 30 is up just one percent but joint spending is up 15 percent compared to 2015, the last election when Assembly candidates were alone on the ballot<sup>1</sup>, according to the latest reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director, said “While county party fund-raising may not be in absolute free-fall, it is well below totals during the previous decade. For instance, county party committees together raised 34 percent less this year than the \$7.4 million raised in 2009,” he said.

“The fund-raising trendline continues to indicate weakness in the state’s political party system,” he said.

**Table 1**  
**Summary of Campaign Finance Activity by County Committees**  
**January 1 through September 30, 2019 Versus 2015**

<b>2019</b>	<b>RAISED</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND</b>	<b>NET WORTH*</b>
Democratic County Party Committees	\$2,896,072	\$3,135,430	\$2,165,784	\$2,007,596
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,994,802	\$1,938,038	\$ 792,701	\$1,218,274
<b>Total-Both Parties</b>	<b>\$4,890,874</b>	<b>\$5,073,468</b>	<b>\$2,958,486</b>	<b>\$3,225,870</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>RAISED</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND</b>	<b>NET WORTH*</b>
Democratic County Party Committees	\$2,900,986	\$2,586,700	\$1,266,910	\$1,089,629
Republican County Party Committees	\$1,942,512	\$1,590,156	\$ 856,891	\$1,727,162
<b>Total-Both Parties</b>	<b>\$4,843,498</b>	<b>\$4,176,856</b>	<b>\$2,123,801</b>	<b>\$2,816,791</b>
<b>Difference 2019 versus 2015</b>	<b>RAISED</b>	<b>SPENT</b>	<b>CASH-ON-HAND</b>	<b>NET WORTH*</b>
Democratic County Party Committees	-0.2%	21%	71%	84%
Republican County Party Committees	3%	22%	-7%	-29%
<b>Total-Both Parties</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>15%</b>

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

<sup>1</sup> There is one special election for the state Senate in the 1<sup>st</sup> legislative district.

Democratic fund-raising is down 0.2 percent while spending is up 21 percent. Democrats have 66 percent larger cash reserves than in 2015. Republican fund-raising is up three percent and spending is up 22 percent. Republican cash-on-hand is down seven percent.

Brindle said Democratic officials may have felt less fund-raising pressure during the quarter because their combined cash reserves are triple those of Republicans.

“You always want to approach the election with more cash in the bank than your opponents. From that standpoint, Democratic county parties as a group have an advantage this quarter,” said Brindle.

The \$2.9 million in combined cash-on-hand is smaller than reserves reported at this point in 2018, when there were federal elections, and in 2017, when there was a gubernatorial election and all 120 legislative seats were in contention. Notably, it is larger than previous cash reserves dating back to 2009.

**Table 2**  
**County Party Fundraising and Spending**  
**through Third Quarter 2008-2019**

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	STATE OR FEDERAL	STATEWIDE ELECTION
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
2019	\$4,890,874	\$5,073,468	\$2,958,486	State	A

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

Bipartisan changes are necessary to make it easier for all parties to raise funds, Brindle said. “We need to try to reverse the flow of funds away from parties, which are accountable and transparent, to independent special interest groups that often operate in the dark,” he said.

Reforms pending in the legislature that could help include ending the complexity of pay-to-play laws by creating one state law, raising the contribution limit for public contractors from \$300 to \$1,000, and raising contribution limits for county parties and other parties and candidates.

“Except for gubernatorial candidates, party and candidate contribution limits have not been raised since 2005 even though inflation has gone up nearly 32 percent during that period,” Brindle said.

Among Democratic county committees that have filed their quarterly reports, Bergen, Camden, Gloucester, Mercer, Passaic, Salem and Union reported cash balances above \$100,000.

Monmouth reported a negative cash balance.

**Table 3**  
**Campaign Finance Activity of**  
**Democratic County Party Committees**  
**January 1 through September 30, 2019**

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 87,458	\$ 84,587	\$ 9,379	\$ 9,379
Bergen	\$ 398,456	\$ 236,759	\$ 201,675	\$ 184,043
Burlington	\$ 99,571	\$ 166,822	\$ 14,286	\$ (3,293)
Camden	\$ 233,724	\$ 436,132	\$ 409,414	\$ 409,414
Cape May	\$ 61,666	\$ 43,043	\$ 19,582	\$ 19,582
Cumberland	\$ 22,073	\$ 28,424	\$ 5,287	\$ 5,287
Essex	\$ 256,882	\$ 277,114	\$ 87,888	\$ 87,888
Gloucester	\$ 184,537	\$ 157,883	\$ 444,431	\$ 444,431
Hudson***	\$ 102,451	\$ 153,815	\$ 25,294	\$ (113,851)
Hunterdon	\$ 30,918	\$ 36,356	\$ 10,107	\$ 10,107
Mercer	\$ 70,550	\$ 57,846	\$ 170,828	\$ 170,828
Middlesex	\$ 451,874	\$ 420,993	\$ 46,238	\$ 46,238
Monmouth	\$ 65,906	\$ 116,024	\$ (50,118)	\$ (50,118)
Morris***	\$ 123,747	\$ 97,024	\$ 33,662	\$ 33,662
Ocean	\$ 32,202	\$ 39,010	\$ 36,183	\$ 52,349
Passaic	\$ 283,204	\$ 254,401	\$ 415,751	\$ 415,751
Salem	\$ 21,896	\$ 20,831	\$ 105,736	\$ 105,736
Somerset	\$ 131,019	\$ 123,282	\$ 38,348	\$ 38,348
Sussex	\$ 10,102	\$ 16,734	\$ 13,601	\$ 13,601
Union	\$ 224,129	\$ 363,348	\$ 124,752	\$ 124,752
Warren**	\$ 3,705	\$ 5,002	\$ 3,462	\$ 3,462
<b>Democrats-Total</b>	<b>\$2,896,072</b>	<b>\$3,135,430</b>	<b>\$2,165,784</b>	<b>\$2,007,596</b>

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

\*\*1<sup>st</sup> quarter totals

\*\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> quarter totals

NA-not available

Among Republican county committees filing reports, Somerset County reported a cash balance above \$100,000.

**Table 4**  
**Campaign Finance Activity of**  
**Republican County Party Committees**  
**January 1 through September 30, 2019**

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 29,408	\$ 43,338	\$ 26,411	\$ 26,411
Bergen	\$ 79,976	\$ 84,375	\$ 5,585	\$ 5,585
Burlington	\$ 287,740	\$ 326,185	\$ 15,029	\$ 447,994
Camden	\$ 12,023	\$ 22,021	\$ 8,471	\$ 8,471
Cape May	\$ 112,049	\$ 106,929	\$ 39,427	\$ 39,427
Cumberland	\$ 32,983	\$ 56,101	\$ 25,744	\$ 25,744
Essex	\$0	\$ 1,775	\$ 17,732	\$ 17,732
Gloucester	\$ 34,524	\$ 42,160	\$ 21,670	\$ 21,670
Hudson	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 93,232	\$ 105,552	\$ 1,070	\$ 1,070
Mercer	\$ 5,030	\$ 13,409	\$ 19,672	\$ 19,672
Middlesex	\$ 3,580	\$ 13,179	\$ 35,670	\$ 35,670
Monmouth	\$ 143,172	\$ 130,062	\$ 41,186	\$ 41,186
Morris**	\$ 30,128	\$ 21,344	\$ 20,434	\$ 13,114
Ocean	\$ 121,201	\$ 132,575	\$ 31,284	\$ 31,284
Passaic	\$ 233,929	\$ 194,480	\$ 57,939	\$ 57,939
Salem	\$ 261,959	\$ 243,706	\$ 36,845	\$ 36,845
Somerset	\$ 302,308	\$ 205,442	\$253,982	\$ 253,982
Sussex	\$ 52,308	\$ 58,386	\$ 29,116	\$ 29,044
Union	\$ 78,585	\$ 68,860	\$ 70,618	\$ 70,618
Warren	\$ 80,665	\$ 68,159	\$ 34,813	\$ 34,813
<b>Republicans-Total</b>	<b>\$1,994,802</b>	<b>\$1,938,038</b>	<b>\$792,701</b>	<b>\$1,218,274</b>

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

\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> quarter totals NA-not available

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by 5 pm October 28, 2019. 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](http://www.elec.state.nj.us)).

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