



NEWS RELEASE

Respond to:
P.O. Box 185
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185
(609) 292-8700

CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:

September 4, 2003

The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission today released A Resurgent Party System: Repartyization Takes Hold, a 106-page report and the latest in a series of sixteen white papers.

According to Jeff Brindle, Deputy Director of the Election Law Enforcement Commission and author of the white paper, the report examines recent financial activity of three major political party entities: legislative leadership committees, state party committees, and county party committees.

In updating findings published in previous reports, the paper noted a tremendous increase in financial activity in recent years by all three types of party entities and that overall the Democratic Party recorded significant gains. For example, said Brindle, “from 1997 through 2001, fundraising was increased by legislative leadership committees by 83 percent and by the state party committees by 130 percent. During 1998-2002, county party committees increased their receipts by 32 percent.”

According to Brindle, these periods witnessed exceptional growth in financial activity by the Democratic Party entities whereas activity by the Republican entities either grew modestly or actually declined.

Brindle noted that in terms of actual dollars raised, the Democratic legislative committees raised more money than the Republican ones in both 1997 and 2001. In 1997, the Democratic leadership committees raised \$3.05 million compared with \$3 million for the Republican ones. In 2001, the Democratic committees raised \$5.7 million and the Republican committees \$5.3 million.

Brindle said that “regarding the state party committees and the county party committees there can be no doubt that the Democratic Party entities led the way in terms of the repartyization process.”

- more -

The report noted that in 1997 the Democratic State Committee (DSC) raised \$5.1 million (48 percent of funds) and the Republican State Committee raised \$5.6 million (52 percent of funds). Four years later, the Democratic State Committee would raise \$19.9 million (81 percent of funds) and the Republican State Committee \$4.7 million (19 percent of funds).

Brindle said, "Between 1997 and 2001, the Democratic State Committee increased fundraising by 290 percent whereas the Republican State Committee fundraising totals declined by 17 percent."

According to the report, a similar trend existed with regard to county party committees. Raising \$5.2 million in 1998, fundraising by the Democratic county committees increased to \$14.6 million in 2002, a 180 percent increase. The Republican county committees raised \$6.5 million in 1998 and \$6.9 million in 2002, an increase of six percent.

Brindle said that the time frame during which the Democratic Party at the state level began the process of returning to power in Trenton coincided with its increased fundraising success. He said that while this process culminated in 2001, it actually began in earnest between the elections of 1995 and 1997.

Brindle said: "Following the election of 1995, the Republican majority in the Assembly slipped to 50-30 and in the State Senate to 24-16. After 1997 the Republican margin in the Assembly slipped again to 48-32. This period, 1995-1997, coincided with the time frame during which the Democratic Leadership Committees gained parity with the Republican ones in terms of financial activity. Raising \$1.4 million in 1995, the Democrats raised \$3.05 million in 1997. The Republican leadership committees raised \$2.9 million in 1995 and \$3 million in 1997. Prior to this two-year period, the Democratic Leadership Committees lagged behind the Republican ones. The report suggests that it was during this period that contributors sensed the possibility of Democratic gains at the polls."

Brindle noted that this report is the most comprehensive white paper thus far in that it also examines in detail sources of contributions, strategies in expenditure activity, and compares patterns and overall activity to that found in previous reports.

The report can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (609) 292-8700 or by visiting ELEC's web site at <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/>.