



NEWS RELEASE

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:
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With both county and state elections looming this year, county party fundraising for the first quarter of 2015 is slightly ahead of similar totals from the past three years, according to the latest reports filed with the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Thirty-nine of the 42 county parties reported raising \$1.1 million during the first three months of 2015, and spending about the same amount. They also reported \$1.4 million in combined cash reserves.

While the differences are not dramatic, the fundraising and spending totals are the highest since 2011. The cash reserve is larger than last year at this time, but just under the 2013 benchmark.

**TABLE 1
COUNTY PARTY FUNDRAISING AND SPENDING
THROUGH FIRST QUARTER 2009-2015**

YEAR	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	MAJOR STATE ELECTION?
2009	\$1,338,922	\$1,468,328	\$1,855,920	Yes
2010	\$1,023,791	\$1,199,044	\$2,078,378	No
2011	\$1,088,038	\$1,108,475	\$1,141,821	Yes
2012	\$ 891,658	\$ 978,826	\$1,023,935	No
2013	\$ 957,098	\$ 980,628	\$1,457,253	Yes
2014	\$1,048,455	\$1,099,335	\$1,312,788	No
2015	\$1,080,157	\$1,118,813	\$1,437,520	Yes

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said the trend is further evidence that county party fundraising hit bottom in 2012 even though it is not roaring back to historic highs of the past.

“Fundraising activity is slightly better than the past few years but still small compared to a decade ago. In 2005, the 42 county party committees raised a combined \$19 million,” he said. “By contrast, they raised just \$7.6 million in 2014.”

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“Back in 2005, county party officials did not face stiff restrictions on contributions by public contractors, they had little competition from independent special interest groups that have since become more dominant, and they were receiving financial support from two candidates for governor who were independently wealthy,” he said.

Brindle said state and county parties may find it easier to raise money if the Legislature adopts ELEC’s bipartisan reform recommendations.

Those recommendations include consolidating the state’s bewildering pay-to-play laws into a single, clear state law, raising the amount public contractors can contribute, boosting contribution limits for parties and candidates for the first time in several years, and requiring independent special interest groups to fully disclose their fundraising activities.

County parties must raise funds not only for their own races, but many participate in state elections. All 80 Assembly seats are up for reelection this year. There were no state elections in 2014.

A comparison with 2011 totals shows that even though both parties raised slightly less funds than four years ago, they have larger cash reserves now.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY BY COUNTY
COMMITTEES JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31
2011 VERSUS 2015

	RAISED-2015	SPENT-2015	CASH-ON-HAND-2015	NETWORTH-2015*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$ 619,216	\$ 680,649	\$ 916,544	\$ 653,867
Republican County Party Committees	\$ 460,941	\$ 438,164	\$ 520,976	\$1,387,180
Total-Both Parties	\$1,080,157	\$1,118,813	\$1,437,520	\$2,041,047
	RAISED-2011	SPENT-2011	CASH-ON-HAND-2011	NET WORTH-2011*
Democratic County Party Committees	\$ 621,807	\$ 544,888	\$ 790,265	\$ 274,946
Republican County Party Committees	\$ 466,231	\$ 563,587	\$ 351,556	\$ 694,349
Total-Both Parties	\$1,088,038	\$1,108,475	\$1,141,821	\$ 969,295
Difference 2015 versus 2011				
Democratic County Party Committees	-0.4%	25%	16%	138%
Republican County Party Committees	-1%	-22%	48%	100%
Total-Both Parties	-1%	0.9%	26%	111%

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

Among Democratic county committees that have filed their reports, Passaic Counties was the only one to report cash-on-hand above \$100,000. Hudson County reported a negative net worth after adjusting for debts.

TABLE 3
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF
DEMOCRATIC COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2015

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 14,588	\$ 7,154	\$ 42,023	\$ 42,023
Bergen	\$132,965	\$113,723	\$ 24,371	\$ 94,704
Burlington	NA	NA	NA	NA
Camden	\$ 74,649	\$119,460	\$ 82,997	\$ 82,997
Cape May	\$ 1,945	\$ -	\$ 6,140	\$ 6,140
Cumberland	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,825	\$ 15,410	\$ 15,410
Essex	\$ 86,660	\$ 91,622	\$ 46,407	\$ 46,407
Gloucester	\$ 12,521	\$ 53,298	\$ 42,795	\$ 9,709
Hudson	\$ 750	\$ 37,091	\$ 61,585	\$(245,952)
Hunterdon	\$ 1,985	\$ 1,483	\$ 19,320	\$ 19,320
Mercer	\$ 750	\$ 8,814	\$ 54,731	\$ 54,731
Middlesex	\$ 55,178	\$ 71,020	\$ 10,965	\$ 10,965
Monmouth	\$ 43,438	\$ 43,217	\$ 5,925	\$ 5,925
Morris	\$ 12,635	\$ 9,434	\$ 9,916	\$ 9,916
Ocean	\$ 11,764	\$ 5,124	\$ 13,413	\$ 29,580
Passaic	\$101,414	\$ 43,394	\$375,048	\$ 375,048
Salem	\$ 600	\$ 3,513	\$ 9,464	\$ 9,464
Somerset	\$ 14,895	\$ 12,196	\$ 2,210	\$ 2,210
Sussex	\$ 5,225	\$ 3,965	\$ 4,556	\$ 4,556
Union	\$ 46,254	\$ 53,316	\$ 89,268	\$ 80,714
Warren	NA	NA	NA	NA
Democrats-Total	\$619,216	\$680,649	\$916,544	\$653,867

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

Among Republican county committees that have filed their reports, Somerset reported a cash reserve larger than \$100,000. Along with Somerset, Burlington County reported a net worth larger than \$100,000.

TABLE 4
CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACTIVITY OF
REPUBLICAN COUNTY PARTY COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2015

COUNTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
Atlantic	\$ 33,111	\$ 70,941	\$ 4,972	\$ 4,972
Bergen	\$ 42,532	\$ 47,203	\$ 17,404	\$ 17,404
Burlington	\$ 142,630	\$ 148,303	\$ 4,480	\$ 872,688
Camden	\$ 8,238	\$ 3,159	\$ 24,487	\$ 24,487
Cape May	\$ 1,945	\$ -	\$ 6,140	\$ 6,140
Cumberland	\$ 11,588	\$ 4,775	\$ 28,380	\$ 28,380
Essex	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,421	\$ 2,351	\$ 2,351
Gloucester	\$ 7,500	\$ 8,478	\$ 3,272	\$ 3,272
Hudson**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 15,150	\$ 17,618	\$ 20,294	\$ 20,294
Mercer	\$ 6,515	\$ 3,300	\$ 6,325	\$ 6,325
Middlesex	\$ 8,948	\$ 2,604	\$ 29,660	\$ 29,660
Monmouth	\$ 43,098	\$ 25,397	\$ 42,582	\$ 42,582
Morris	\$ 60,905	\$ 20,626	\$ 54,987	\$ 54,987
Ocean	\$ 21,226	\$ 9,214	\$ 15,267	\$ 15,267
Passaic	NA	NA	NA	NA
Salem	\$ 7,005	\$ 24,299	\$ 15,172	\$ 15,172
Somerset	\$ 22,120	\$ 23,740	\$ 195,981	\$ 193,977
Sussex	\$ 6,855	\$ 5,372	\$ 6,061	\$ 6,061
Union	\$ 16,125	\$ 16,451	\$ 34,607	\$ 34,607
Warren	\$ 3,950	\$ 5,263	\$ 8,554	\$ 8,554
Republicans-Total	\$ 460,941	\$ 438,164	\$ 520,976	\$1,387,180

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

**Does not expect to spend more than \$5,500.

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon April 29. They have yet to be verified by ELEC staff, and should be considered preliminary.

Interested parties are encouraged to review individual reports at ELEC's website (www.elec.state.nj.us).

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