



NEWS RELEASE

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POST-ELECTION FUNDRAISING LULL FOR “BIG SIX” COMMITTEES

Fundraising by the two state parties and four legislative leadership PACs was subdued during the first quarter of 2020, with a combined haul of just \$819,384, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director, said “first quarter blues” typically occur after an election.

“This is not unusual. The so-called “Big Six” committees are just starting to replenish their reserves after an election when all 80 Assembly members ran for office. Plus, there was a special state Senate election in the first legislative district and numerous local elections,” said Brindle.

While fundraising was not robust, it still was better than the first quarter, post-election hauls in 2014 and 2016, he noted.

“The big questions is whether the COVID-19 pandemic, which really didn’t strike with a vengeance until mid-March, will hurt fundraising by these and other political committees in the state going forward,” Brindle said. “ELEC will be closely watching to see if an even deeper than normal fundraising slump emerges.”

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

BOTH PARTIES	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH	STATE ELECTIONS
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	
2019	\$ 981,798	\$ 634,650	\$1,868,717	\$1,728,640	Assembly
2020	\$ 819,384	\$ 679,768	\$ 799,682	\$ 719,825	

Democrats, who control the governor’s seat and both legislative houses, retained their fundraising dominance and reported larger reserves during the quarter.

TABLE 2
FUNDRAISING BY “BIG SIX” COMMITTEES
JANUARY 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT**	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$181,249	\$ 43,973	\$ 272,796	\$272,796
Senate Republican Majority	\$ 37,500	\$ 33,544	\$ 32,780	\$ 32,780
Assembly Republican Victory	\$ 72,679	\$ 56,983	\$ 56,479	\$ 56,479
Sub-Total- Republicans	\$291,428	\$134,500	\$ 362,055	\$362,055
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Dollars)	\$ 73,161	\$ (6,213)	\$(356,473)	\$168,124
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Percent)	34%	-4%	-50%	87%
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$370,195	\$338,571	\$ 65,642	\$ 36,224
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 31,811	\$ 69,239	\$ 352,147	\$332,147
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$125,950	\$137,458	\$ 19,838	\$ (10,601)
Sub-Total- Democrats	\$527,956	\$545,268	\$ 437,627	\$357,770
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Dollars)	\$ 73,175	\$130,806	\$ 59,064	\$136,111
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Percent)	16%	32%	16%	61%
Total- Both Parties				
Sub-Total- Both Parties	\$819,384	\$679,768	\$ 799,682	\$719,825
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Dollars)	\$146,336	\$124,593	\$(297,409)	\$ (57,820)
Versus First Quarter 2016 (Percent)	22%	22%	-27%	-14%

*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 reserves or incurred debt.

Compared to the same quarter in 2016, both parties reported better fundraising, and Democrats spent more.

Brindle said even if the virus crisis doesn’t further depress party fundraising, current coffers are far less than they were a decade ago, in part because of tight limits on public contractor contributions and fundraising competition from independent special interest groups that have choked off many contributions that used to fill party warchests.

“ELEC continues to believe that legislative changes can help reverse this trend, which is important because party committees are more accountable and transparent than so-called “outside” spenders,” Brindle said. “We will continue to work with lawmakers to secure passage of new laws that will hopefully redirect more funds back into party coffers.”

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).