



# NEWS RELEASE

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## County Parties Have \$3.1 Million Socked Away Heading Into General Elections

Despite lackluster fund-raising so far this year, county political parties are heading toward the fall general elections with their fourth largest combined mid-year war chest dating back to 2001, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

With 40 of 42 counties reporting, the combined cash-on-hand for county parties is \$3.06 million. Taking inflation into account, cash reserves at the six-month point were higher only in 2003 (\$3.9 million), 2019 (\$3.4 million) and 2017 (\$3.069 million). The smallest total occurred in 2012 (\$1.2 million).

**Table 1**  
**Mid-year Cash-On-Hand Totals for County Parties Since 2001 Adjusting for Inflation**

Year	Value Then	In 2021 Dollars
<b>Top Five</b>		
2003	\$2,638,558	\$3,896,118
2019	\$3,251,147	\$3,455,112
2017	\$2,768,884	\$3,069,087
<b>2021</b>	<b>\$3,057,443</b>	<b>\$3,057,443</b>
2018	\$2,793,340	\$3,022,374
<b>Bottom Five</b>		
2015	\$1,706,465	\$1,956,145
2013	\$1,627,287	\$1,897,893
2011	\$1,444,408	\$1,744,650
2014	\$1,492,059	\$1,712,399
2012	\$1,036,375	\$1,226,421

“Cash-on-hand is an important barometer of a political committee’s financial strength,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “While overall county party fund-raising has been lagging largely due to the pandemic, the collective war chest of more than \$3 million is certainly respectable at this point in the election year.”

Democratic county party committees have raised nearly twice as much as Republican county party committees, spent more than twice as much and they are sitting on four times more cash than GOP committees.

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**Table 2**  
**Snapshot of Mid-year Campaign**  
**Finance Activities for County Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Cash-on-Hand</b>	<b>Net Worth</b>
<b>Democratic</b>	<b>\$1,560,160</b>	<b>\$1,708,410</b>	<b>\$2,483,366</b>	<b>\$2,351,423</b>
<b>Republican</b>	<b>\$ 869,248</b>	<b>\$ 730,284</b>	<b>\$ 574,077</b>	<b>\$1,055,214</b>
Combined	\$2,429,408	\$2,438,694	\$3,057,443	\$3,406,637

While cash reserves are holding up, overall fundraising during the first six months of 2021 was the second lowest since 2001 when all years are based on current dollars.

County parties have raised \$2.4 million through June 30. Only the 2020 total (\$2.052 million) was smaller in a year when many fund-raising events were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 health crisis.

**Table 3**  
**Mid-year Fund-raising Totals for County**  
**Parties Since 2001 Adjusted for Inflation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Value Then</b>	<b>In 2021 Dollars</b>
<b>Top Five</b>		
2003	\$7,932,857	\$11,713,726
2004	\$6,339,337	\$ 9,117,906
2002	\$6,181,702	\$ 9,335,985
2001	\$5,728,804	\$ 8,793,747
2007	\$5,049,224	\$ 6,616,382
<b>Bottom Five</b>		
2014	\$2,379,387	\$ 2,730,763
2010	\$2,070,581	\$ 2,579,927
2012	\$2,115,739	\$ 2,503,714
<b>2021</b>	<b>\$2,429,408</b>	<b>\$ 2,429,408</b>
2020	\$1,955,019	\$ 2,052,350

Despite this trend, Brindle said there are signs that fund-raising is perking up. Gubernatorial candidates and their allies are starting to send checks, some sizeable, to county committees.

Since May, Governor Phil Murphy, who is running for reelection, has sent \$65,927 to county party committees through his gubernatorial campaign committee. Another favorable sign for Democratic county parties is the \$37,000 check (the maximum a county party can receive in a year) sent by the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) to Bergen County Democrats on May 7.

DGA contributed \$703,000 to county party committees when Murphy first ran in 2017. Murphy is DGA finance chairman.

On the Republican side, the campaign committee of GOP candidate Jack Ciattarelli so far has sent a \$1,000 check to Morris County Republicans.

In addition, retired drug firm executive Bob Hugin, who Ciattarelli picked as state Republican chairman in June, already this year has written \$37,000 checks each to Union and Atlantic County Republicans. Since 2018, he has given another \$132,500 to county parties. Hugin spent \$37 million of his personal funds running unsuccessfully for US Senate in 2018.

With the likely influx of funds from national groups and candidate supporters, Brindle said county coffers are likely to see a significant infusion of funds between now and the November 2 election.

“Whenever you have the governor’s seat and all 120 legislative seats up for grabs, it raises the stakes. Especially since only New Jersey and Virginia have gubernatorial races this year,” Brindle said.

“Counties play a key role in helping with get-out-the-vote and other activities during a major state election year. In addition to tapping their reserves, they are likely to receive additional funds,” he said.

Eight Democratic county party committees- Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Mercer, Passaic, Salem and Union - reported a cash reserve above \$100,000. Hudson County Democrats have a negative net worth when debts they owe are subtracted from their cash-on-hand.

**Table 4**  
**Campaign Finance Activity of**  
**Democratic County Party Committees**  
**January 1 through June 30, 2021**

County	Raised	Spent	Cash-On-Hand	Net Worth*
Atlantic	\$ 39,867	\$ 29,480	\$ 15,228	\$ 12,328
Bergen	\$ 351,320	\$ 272,577	\$ 307,056	\$ 307,056
Burlington	\$ 36,409	\$ 26,545	\$ 196,433	\$ 190,058
Camden	\$ 216,404	\$ 236,128	\$ 140,989	\$ 140,989
Cape May	\$ 4,662	\$ 3,876	\$ 6,730	\$ 6,730
Cumberland	\$ 10,450	\$ 9,379	\$ 2,066	\$ 2,066
Essex	\$ 161,235	\$ 260,062	\$ 28,072	\$ 28,072
Gloucester	\$ 16,500	\$ 126,431	\$ 467,016	\$ 467,016
Hudson	\$ 1,405	\$ 38,826	\$ 14,405	\$(124,369)
Hunterdon	\$ 16,783	\$ 8,299	\$ 36,447	\$ 36,447
Mercer	\$ 26,038	\$ 17,435	\$ 267,043	\$ 267,043
Middlesex	\$ 252,360	\$ 386,944	\$ 8,096	\$ 8,096
Monmouth	\$ 49,934	\$ 46,072	\$ 3,945	\$ 3,945
Morris	\$ 36,324	\$ 31,113	\$ 13,348	\$ 13,287
Ocean	\$ 34,842	\$ 15,174	\$ 33,361	\$ 49,528
Passaic	\$ 120,734	\$ 48,612	\$ 452,847	\$ 452,847
Salem	\$0	\$ 1,808	\$ 113,730	\$ 113,730
Somerset	\$ 27,446	\$ 23,599	\$ 91,137	\$ 91,137
Sussex	\$ 5,317	\$ 4,677	\$ 13,927	\$ 13,927
Union	\$ 152,131	\$ 121,371	\$ 271,490	\$ 271,490
Warren**	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Democrats-Total</b>	<b>\$1,560,160</b>	<b>\$1,708,410</b>	<b>\$2,483,366</b>	<b>\$2,351,423</b>

\*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.  
 NA= Not Available \*\*Does not expect to spend more than \$7,200 this year.

No Republican county party reported a cash reserve larger than \$100,000.

**Table 5**  
**Campaign Finance Activity of**  
**Republican County Party Committees**  
**January 1 through June 30, 2021**

<b>County</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Cash-On-Hand</b>	<b>Net Worth*</b>
Atlantic	\$ 47,587	\$ 7,784	\$ 47,113	\$ 47,113
Bergen	\$ 51,398	\$ 49,680	\$ 26,061	\$ 16,061
Burlington	\$ 28,495	\$ 33,898	\$ 8,584	\$ 507,322
Camden	\$ 17,981	\$ 16,698	\$ 12,589	\$ 12,589
Cape May	\$ 93,815	\$ 46,555	\$ 91,026	\$ 91,026
Cumberland	\$ 12,060	\$ 5,469	\$ 9,813	\$ 9,813
Essex	\$ 5,000	\$ 14,922	\$ 16,411	\$ 16,411
Gloucester	\$ 14,980	\$ 30,789	\$ 36,010	\$ 36,010
Hudson**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hunterdon	\$ 63,053	\$ 55,082	\$ 20,633	\$ 20,633
Mercer	\$ 4,863	\$ 2,448	\$ 2,839	\$ 2,839
Middlesex	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,456	\$ 14,117	\$ 14,117
Monmouth	\$100,047	\$131,652	\$ 22,206	\$ 22,206
Morris	\$ 98,663	\$ 93,801	\$ 24,417	\$ 16,817
Ocean	\$ 35,535	\$ 82,109	\$ 9,096	\$ 9,096
Passaic	\$124,100	\$ 82,756	\$ 74,432	\$ 74,432
Salem	NA	NA	NA	NA
Somerset	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sussex	\$ 40,744	\$ 20,233	\$ 40,198	\$ 40,198
Union	\$ 71,624	\$ 20,095	\$ 89,075	\$ 89,075
Warren	\$ 55,304	\$ 33,857	\$ 29,457	\$ 29,457
<b>Republicans-Total</b>	<b>\$869,248</b>	<b>\$730,284</b>	<b>\$574,077</b>	<b>\$1,055,214</b>

\*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.  
 NA=Not available. \*\* Does not expect to spend more than \$7,200 this year.

The numbers in this analysis are based on reports filed by noon July 26, 2021. 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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