



NEWS RELEASE

Respond to:
P.O. Box 185
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185

(609) 292-8700 or Toll Free Within NJ 1-888-313-ELEC (3532)

CONTACT: JEFF BRINDLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR RELEASE:
October 21, 2021

\$6.1 Million Already Spent on Top Two Legislative Battleground Districts

With the legislative general election twelve days away, just two of the 40 legislative districts have attracted one in three dollars spent overall, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

In the past week, spending topped \$6.1 million combined for the Second Legislative District (Atlantic County) and Eighth Legislative District (parts of Atlantic, Burlington and Camden Counties) due mainly to an influx by independent committees. That is 33 percent of the \$18.7 million spent so far on the election.

**Table 1
Spending in Top Two Districts
Versus Statewide Totals**

District	Candidates*	Independent Spending**	Total
2	\$ 1,240,943	\$2,057,534	\$ 3,298,477
8	\$ 1,515,293	\$1,313,251	\$ 2,828,544
Total Top Two	\$ 2,756,236	\$3,370,785	\$ 6,127,021
Total Statewide	\$12,282,410	\$6,464,712	\$18,747,122
Top Two Districts as Percent of Total Spending	22%	52%	33%

*Reflects direct candidate spending through October 4 plus more recent spending by a legislative leadership committee

**Reflects spending through October 19

Reports filed during the last week show that independent spending committees already have spent \$3.4 million in the two districts. That total represents 52 percent of all independent spending and 93 percent of independent spending where committees have linked spending to a legislative district.

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said the agency issued this special update because some independent groups reported their latest totals between the release of candidate reports on October 12 and 28 and their spending was significant.

"Independent spending committees, which are supposed to operate separate from candidates and parties, have become a major force in New Jersey elections. They typically target the most competitive districts and spending so far bears this out," he said.

The biggest spending this past week was by American Democratic Majority, which sank \$1.2 million into the Eighth Legislative District.

The 527 political organization is affiliated with South Jersey Democrats and is trying to maintain at least partial control of the historically GOP district after convincing the incumbent Republican senator to switch parties in 2019.

Candidate spending totals include \$20,748 spent on their behalf this past week by the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee. The totals do not include \$220,000 donated by the legislative leadership committee to 8th district candidates and \$100,000 to 2nd district candidates since October 13.

According to ELEC research, the Eighth Legislative District has never featured the state's most expensive race though it has twice made the top five.

The most expensive so far was \$3.3 million spent in 2007- the equivalent of \$4.4 million in today's dollars.

Table 2
Total Independent Spending
to Date in Top Two Districts

Independent Spending Committee	District 2	District 8	Total
Garden State Forward	\$1,821,377		\$1,821,377
American Democratic Majority	\$ 111,157	\$1,177,949	\$1,289,106
Turnout Project	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000
Republican State Leadership Committee	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000
NJ League of Conservation Voters Victory Fund		\$ 10,302	\$ 10,302
Total	\$2,057,534	\$1,313,251	\$3,370,785

The Second Legislative District, which so far is the costliest legislative race this year at \$3.4 million, has been one of the most contested districts during the last two decades.

Three times since 2001, it has hosted the state's most expensive legislative election, and six times it has made the top five. The priciest contest was the \$5.8 million matchup in 2011, or \$7.1 million in today's dollars.

The final pre-election analytical press release on the legislative campaign will be released October 28.

###