



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Top 25 Special Interest Groups Spent \$285 Million on Lobbying Since 2000

The top 25 special interest spenders alone invested almost \$285 million on lobbying between 2000 and 2022, according to a new analysis by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

**Table 1**  
**Top 25 Lobbying Spenders by**  
**Special Interest Group**  
**2000-2022**

GROUP	TOTAL	GROUP	TOTAL
New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)	\$52,560,827	Chemistry Council of NJ/ State Street Associates	\$ 8,771,067
AARP	\$16,563,882	Atlantic Electric	\$ 8,678,280
Verizon	\$16,398,266	NJ Realtors	\$ 8,626,867
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield	\$16,288,805	Honeywell	\$ 7,839,524
Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG)	\$15,981,607	NJ Business and Industry Association	\$ 7,553,298
New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA)	\$13,546,085	Cooper Health System	\$ 6,359,963
Prudential Companies	\$11,688,355	AT&T	\$ 6,292,437
NJ State League of Municipalities	\$11,074,028	Hackensack University Medical Center/ Hackensack Meridian Health	\$ 6,020,456
Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative	\$10,600,153	Cablevision/CSC Holdings	\$ 5,951,725
Comcast	\$10,106,102	Virtua	\$ 5,656,840
New Direction NJ Corporation	\$ 9,378,381	United Water/ Suez Water	\$ 5,458,544
NJ Builders Association	\$ 9,008,772	Healthcare Institute	\$ 5,391,639
First Energy/ JCPL	\$ 8,909,855	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$284,705,757</b>

“These 25 groups were responsible for one-fifth of all lobbying expenditures during that 23-year period,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director. “Most of these are large organizations with big financial stakes in New Jersey. Policies they support or oppose can have a significant impact on these organizations and the lives of New Jersey citizens.”

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Annual reports filed for 2022 show that eight of the top ten spenders last year also rank among the top spenders since 2000. However, for the first time in a decade, no group spent more than \$1 million. In 2021, four<sup>1</sup> of the top ten spent more than that sum.

**Table 2**  
**Top Ten Special Interest Lobbying Spenders**  
**2022 Versus 2021**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE \$</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE %</b>
Public Service Enterprise Group (PSE&G)*	\$ 849,112	\$2,663,960	\$(1,814,848)	-68%
American Civil Liberties Union Of New Jersey	\$ 716,928	\$ 365,864	\$ 351,064	96%
NJ Realtors/ NJ Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization Fund*	\$ 714,897	\$ 479,179	\$ 235,718	49%
AARP NJ*	\$ 648,590	\$ 389,872	\$ 258,718	66%
NJ State League of Municipalities*	\$ 646,740	\$ 610,245	\$ 36,495	6%
Chemistry Council of NJ (Includes State Street Associates)*	\$ 636,306	\$ 553,840	\$ 82,466	15%
NJ Hospital Association*	\$ 608,069	\$ 637,597	\$ (29,528)	-5%
CEP Renewables LLC	\$ 605,685	\$ 175,000	\$ 430,685	246%
Engineers Labor Employer Cooperative*	\$ 566,394	\$1,213,934	\$ (647,540)	-53%
NJ Business & Industry Association*	\$ 550,851	\$ 518,222	\$ 32,629	6%
<b>Total Top Ten Spending</b>	<b>\$ 6,543,573</b>			
<b>Total Lobbying Spending</b>	<b>\$95,076,034</b>			
<b>Top Ten As Percent of Total</b>	<b>7%</b>			

\*Also among top 25 spenders since 2000

Preliminary 2022 numbers show lobbyists spent a total of \$95.1 million last year- a drop of 0.9 percent versus updated totals for 2021. Even with the decrease, it is the fourth largest lobbying spending total ever for New Jersey.

**Table 3**  
**Total New Jersey Lobbying**  
**Expenditures By Year**  
**2018-2022**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>CHANGE- \$</b>	<b>CHANGE- %</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>\$ 95,076,034</b>	<b>\$ (911,161)</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>
2021	\$ 95,987,195	\$(10,820,449)	-10.1%
2020	\$106,807,644	\$ 5,164,902	5.1
2019	\$101,642,742	\$ 9,922,613	10.8
2018	\$ 91,720,129	\$ 1,320	0.001

<sup>1</sup> Fuel Merchants Association of NJ, PSEG, Horizon and Engineers Labor Employer Cooperative.

Brindle said lobbying expenditures may be reverting to a more normal pattern following the worst years of the pandemic, which led to scores of emergency bills related to everything from hospital care to business closures. Other big issues in recent years included approval of a special utility bill subsidy to keep nuclear power plants operating; restructuring the state’s largest health insurer; legalization of recreational marijuana use in the state; and approval of offshore windmills.

“The last five years have been a relatively tumultuous time for the state and lobbyists. Things seem to be settling down somewhat,” Brindle said.

One sign of a calmer atmosphere is the fact that the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), which represents 200,000 teachers and other school employees and is the state’s largest union, spent its smallest amount on lobbying since 2014.

Since 2000, no group has come close to the \$52.6 million the group has spent on lobbying. During the period, NJEA spent three times more than AARP, the next highest spender.

It spent the most by one group in a single year- \$11.3 million in 2011, or \$14.9 million in today’s dollars. The teacher’s union also was the top annual spender in five other years- 2010, 2013, 2015, 2019, and 2020.

In 2022, it spent just \$357,260

**Table 4  
 Top Annual Lobbying Spenders  
 in New Jersey Ranked by Year Since 2000**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GROUP</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>INFLATION ADJUSTED</b>
2011	New Jersey Education Association	\$11,259,886	\$14,975,705
2015	New Jersey Education Association	\$10,348,911	\$13,062,707
2010	New Jersey Education Association	\$ 6,869,256	\$ 9,177,572
2019	New Jersey Education Association	\$ 6,240,028	\$ 7,302,085
2020	New Jersey Education Association	\$ 6,255,530	\$ 7,231,018
2006	Verizon	\$ 4,717,250	\$ 7,000,296
2016	Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative	\$ 4,392,830	\$ 5,475,686
2013	New Jersey Education Association	\$ 3,316,893	\$ 4,259,648
2017	Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield	\$ 2,524,921	\$ 3,081,677
2009	NJ Progress PAC	\$ 2,151,864	\$ 3,000,756
2021	PSEG	\$ 2,663,960	\$ 2,941,200
2014	AARP	\$ 1,645,217	\$ 2,079,107
2018	PSEG	\$ 1,475,770	\$ 1,758,239
2008	AARP	\$ 1,261,734	\$ 1,753,217
2007	AARP	\$ 1,188,573	\$ 1,714,970
2000	NJ Hospital Association	\$ 804,081	\$ 1,396,962
2012	PSEG	\$ 863,073	\$ 1,124,618
2005	NJ Builders Association	\$ 606,981	\$ 929,803
2004	NJ Builders Association	\$ 575,817	\$ 911,949
2022	PSEG	\$ 849,112	\$ 868,015
2003	NJ Builders Association	\$ 479,306	\$ 779,315
2002	NJ Builders Association	\$ 379,608	\$ 631,280
2001	NJ Builders Association	\$ 353,950	\$ 598,255

Rounding out the top ten spenders since 2000 are AARP, an association that advocates on behalf of retirees; Verizon and Comcast, two telecommunications firms; Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, the state’s top health insurer; Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG), the state’s top energy producer; New Jersey Hospital Association, which advocates for hospitals; Prudential, an insurance company; the NJ State League of Municipalities, an association of local elected officials; and the Engineers Labor Employer Cooperative, a coalition of unions, contractors and developers. All spent more than \$10 million.

Most unions try to influence state capitol decision-making through contributions made directly to candidates and parties, or through independent spending. They generally do not spend a lot on lobbying. NJEA is unusual because it spends heavily on all three, including lobbying. It is why unions as a sector topped the list.

**Table 5**  
**Top 25 Lobbying Spenders by Sector**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Unions	\$ 52,560,827
Telecommunications	\$ 38,748,530
Energy	\$ 33,569,742
Hospitals	\$ 31,583,344
Issue Advocacy	\$ 25,942,263
Insurance	\$ 16,288,805
Insurance / Finance	\$ 11,688,355
Municipalities	\$ 11,074,028
Unions/Contractors/ Developers Coalition	\$ 10,600,153
Builders	\$ 9,008,772
Chemicals	\$ 8,771,067
Realtors	\$ 8,626,867
Technology	\$ 7,839,524
Business- General	\$ 7,553,298
Water	\$ 5,458,544
Drug Firms	\$ 5,391,639
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$284,705,757</b>

Industries deemed heavily regulated by the state have been prevented since 1911 from making direct contributions to candidates. So traditionally, they have relied more on lobbying than contributions. These industries include energy utilities, telecommunications, insurance, and banks. They tend to spend heavily on lobbying.

Among the top 25 lobbying spenders between 2000 and 2022, more than \$105 million- 37 percent- was spent by state-regulated industries.

Another sign spending was more subdued in 2022 is that outlays for communications- one of the biggest lobbying cost drivers in recent years- fell to a decade low of \$3 million, or 3 percent of total expenditures.

The last year when it was lower was 2014, when the total was \$2.2 million.

By contrast, it hit an all-time high in 2020 at \$18.1 million- 17 percent of all lobbying expenses.

**Table 6**  
**Top Ten Expenditures on**  
**Communications Expenditures in 2022**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Engineers Labor Employer Cooperative	\$ 404,094
AARP NJ	\$ 365,226
Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG)	\$ 261,863
NJ Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization Fund	\$ 257,496
Fuel Merchants Association of NJ	\$ 156,477
Move Health Care Forward NJ Inc	\$ 144,856
RAI Services Company	\$ 105,123
NJ League of Conservation Voters	\$ 83,361
American Property Casualty Insurance Association	\$ 66,500
NJ Realtors	\$ 56,723
<b>Communication Expenditures- Top Ten</b>	<b>\$1,901,720</b>
<b>Total Communications Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,097,942</b>
<b>% Top Ten</b>	<b>61%</b>

The number of lobbyists dipped from 916 in 2021 to 914. The number peaked at 1,043 in 2008.

Despite the more normal rhythm of lobbying activity in 2022, demand for lobbying services set a record for the fourth straight year as the number of clients reached 2,343- up 2.6 percent from 2,283 in 2021.

After falling three straight years, the amount spent on “benefit passing” – gifts like meals, trips or other things of value- given out by lobbyists rose 72 percent to \$2,349. It remains well below the \$163,375 peak in 1992.

An analysis of fees paid by represented entities to governmental affairs agents showed that the most money came from the health care industry. Miscellaneous health care firms paid \$6.1 million while hospitals spent \$3.1 million to hire multi-client firms. These two categories combined totaled \$9.2 million.

Rounding out the top ten business sectors were energy, development, insurance, pharmaceuticals, transportation, finance, marijuana industry firms, and telecommunications.

These ten sectors alone paid \$36.1 million to professional lobbying firms- about half the fees paid to governmental affairs agents. The spending totals do not include direct spending by companies or associations.

**Table 7**  
**Fees Paid to Governmental Affairs Agents**  
**Ranked by Top Ten Business Sectors in 2022**

<b>BUSINESS SECTOR</b>	<b>FEES PAID TO LOBBYISTS</b>
Healthcare- Miscellaneous	\$ 6,129,908
Energy	\$ 5,248,663
Development	\$ 5,110,595
Insurance	\$ 3,951,462
Pharmaceuticals	\$ 3,116,100
Health Care- Hospitals	\$ 3,089,269
Transportation	\$ 2,869,654
Finance	\$ 2,833,010
Marijuana	\$ 1,947,776
Telecommunications	\$ 1,847,159
<b>Total- Top Ten</b>	<b>\$36,143,597</b>

Receipts paid to governmental affairs agents (lobbyists) rose 5 percent in 2022 to \$70 million. The top ten multi-client firms reaped the lion’s share- \$45.7 million, or 65 percent.

**Table 8**  
**Top Ten Multi-Client Lobbying**  
**Firms Ranked by 2022 Receipts**

<b>FIRM</b>	<b>RECEIPTS</b>
Princeton Public Affairs Group Inc	\$11,276,181
Public Strategies Impact LLC	\$ 7,579,515
CLB Partners Inc	\$ 6,005,550
The Zita Group LLC	\$ 3,806,700
MBI Gluckshaw	\$ 3,786,352
Gibbons PC	\$ 3,599,400
Optimus Partners LLC	\$ 2,931,650
Capital Impact Group	\$ 2,339,205
McCarter & English LLP	\$ 2,195,628
Mercury Public Affairs	\$ 2,168,098
<b>Receipts- Top Ten</b>	<b>\$45,688,279</b>
<b>Total Governmental Affairs Agent Receipts</b>	<b>\$70,038,851</b>
<b>Percent Top Ten</b>	<b>65%</b>

**Table 9**  
**Lobbying Expenses by Category- 2018-2022**

CATEGORY	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 % + or -
Salary <sup>1</sup>	\$54,931,497	\$ 56,148,622	\$ 55,465,036	\$58,515,812	\$61,826,240	6%
Support Personnel	\$ 2,463,181	\$ 2,650,872	\$ 2,152,834	\$ 2,556,858	\$ 2,649,580	4%
Fees <sup>2</sup>	\$ 2,261,072	\$ 2,826,599	\$ 4,976,172	\$ 3,592,512	\$ 2,236,067	-38%
Communication Costs <sup>4</sup>	\$ 6,929,935	\$ 13,717,962	\$ 18,141,915	\$ 7,163,184	\$ 3,097,942	-57%
Travel	\$ 541,575	\$ 486,061	\$ 168,658	\$ 144,250	\$ 233,767	62%
Benefit Passing <sup>3</sup>	\$ 2,331	\$ 5,180	\$ 2,783	\$ 1,367	\$ 2,349	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$67,129,591</b>	<b>\$ 75,835,295</b>	<b>\$ 80,907,398</b>	<b>\$71,973,983</b>	<b>\$70,045,945</b>	<b>-3%</b>
Compensation to Governmental Affairs Agent Not Included on Annual Reports <sup>5</sup>	\$24,590,538	\$ 25,807,447	\$ 25,900,246	\$24,013,212	\$25,030,089	4%
<b>Adjusted Total</b>	<b>\$91,720,129</b>	<b>\$101,642,742</b>	<b>\$106,807,644</b>	<b>\$95,987,195</b>	<b>\$95,076,034</b>	<b>-1%</b>

- 1- Salary includes in-house salaries and payments to outside agents.
- 2- Fees include assessments, membership fees and dues.
- 3- Benefit passing includes meals, entertainment, gifts, travel and lodging.
- 4- Communication costs include: printed materials, postage, telephone calls, faxes, receptions, and, in 2006 and years following, also includes direct mail pieces, newspaper advertisements, and television and radio broadcasts.
- 5- Compensation paid by Represented Entities filing the Form L-2 designating a Governmental Affairs Agent now being added due to a change in ELEC methodology to better capture all payments to outside agents

In New Jersey, lobbyists who raise or spend more than \$2,500 were required to file a report on February 15<sup>th</sup> that reflects activity from the prior calendar year.

Summary information about lobbyist activities in 2022 can be obtained at the following website: [https://www.elec.nj.gov/publicinformation/gaa\\_annual.htm](https://www.elec.nj.gov/publicinformation/gaa_annual.htm) Copies of annual reports also are available on ELEC’s website.

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