



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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A heavy dose of independent special interest spending drove the cost of this year's legislative general election above \$30 million, according to a new analysis of disclosure reports by the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC). The spending, which still is considered preliminary, already has established a record high for a year with just Assembly members running.

Table 1
Spending by Independent Committees and
Legislative Candidates through November 20, 2015

GROUP	PRIMARY	GENERAL	COMBINED
General Majority PAC	None	\$ 5,865,657	\$ 5,865,657
Garden State Forward*	None	\$ 3,953,952	\$ 3,953,952
Carpenters Fund for Growth and Progress**	\$ 768,796	\$ 492,527	\$ 1,261,323
National Association of Realtors Fund	\$ 116,765	\$ 268,295	\$ 385,060
NJ Coalition of Real Estate	\$ 39,958	\$ 79,423	\$ 119,381
New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow***	None	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
NJ League of Conservation Voters for a Clean Environment	None	\$ 23,280	\$ 23,280
TOTALS			
Independent Committees	\$ 925,519	\$10,708,134	\$11,633,653
Legislative Candidates	\$12,527,364	\$19,743,918	\$32,271,282
TOTAL-ALL	\$13,452,883	\$30,452,052	\$43,904,935

*Includes \$3,640,000 in contributions to General Majority PAC.

**Includes \$400,000 in contributions to General Majority PAC.

***Contribution to General Majority PAC.

Reports filed with ELEC show that through November 20, 2015, special interest groups spent \$10.7 million on the general election. Legislative candidates spent just over \$19.7 million this fall. Except for one candidate running for a state Senate seat in Legislative District 5, only Assembly members ran for reelection this year.

Of the total spending of \$30.4 million, independent committees represent 35 percent- the largest share ever for a statewide election. In 2013, independent spending was higher because there was a race for governor and the state Senate. But independent spending represented less than 19 percent of total spending two years ago.

“Independent special interest committees played a bigger role than ever in this year's election. Their involvement had a dramatic impact,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director.

Brindle said Democrats not only raised more money as individual candidates but were the main beneficiaries of the independent spending. “Democrats had a huge funding advantage,” said Brindle. “Virtually

-more-

all the \$10.7 million in independent spending benefited Democratic candidates, plus they also spent 2.5 times more than Republican candidates.”

The result: Democrats not only expanded their majority by four seats but held onto two seats they barely won in 2013 in the 2nd and 38th legislative districts. The Democratic margin is now 52-to-28- the largest since 1979.

Compared to three previous elections where the Assembly was the only house up for reelection, 2015 is a record high. The record occurred despite the fact that legislative candidates actually spent more in 2005.

Table 2
Comparison of Total Spending in Years
With Just Assembly Members Running

YEAR	LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES	INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES	TOTAL	TOTAL-INFLATION ADJUSTED
2015	\$19,743,918	\$10,708,134	\$30,452,052	\$30,452,052
2005	\$21,957,188	\$ 3,476	\$21,960,664	\$26,743,883
1999	\$10,873,095	None	\$10,873,095	\$15,522,420
1995	\$10,671,042	None	\$10,671,042	\$16,653,407

The top ten most expensive districts attracted \$12.8 million from legislative candidates and \$5.2 million in direct spending reported by independent committees- \$18 million total, or 59 percent of total spending. That figure is conservative since the independent spending also paid for general expenses such as polling and administration that were not broken out by district. Assuming all independent spending benefited target districts, the top ten districts consumed \$23.5 million, or 77 percent of the total general election spending.

“A handful of districts typically attract the most campaign money because the voter mix in those districts is more even. That makes them more competitive than most other districts around the state,” said Brindle.

Table 3
Top Ten Districts by Total Spending
Through November 20, 2015

DISTRICT	LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES	INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES	TOTAL
2	\$ 2,900,611	\$2,077,623	\$ 4,978,234
1	\$ 1,736,106	\$1,802,412	\$ 3,538,518
38	\$ 1,830,557	\$ 393,741	\$ 2,224,298
11	\$ 1,503,233	\$ 234,118	\$ 1,737,351
14	\$ 711,695	\$ 313,952	\$ 1,025,647
16	\$ 782,398	\$ 250,400	\$ 1,032,798
7	\$ 926,177	\$ 61,157	\$ 987,334
32	\$ 887,028	\$ 7,631	\$ 894,659
6	\$ 778,996	\$ 10,635	\$ 789,631
21	\$ 746,885	\$ 9,054	\$ 755,939
TOTALS	\$12,803,686	\$5,160,723	\$17,964,409

Two years ago, a Democratic Assembly member was elected by just 51 votes in the 2nd district. That race drew \$4.2 million in spending. This year’s campaign in that same district was even more expensive at nearly \$5 million. This year, the Republican and Democratic incumbents both won reelection.

The 2nd District race was the second most costly campaign in state history involving a slate of two Assembly candidates. The most expensive one occurred in 2005 and cost \$5.4 million on an inflation-adjusted basis. It also involved the 2nd District, which during the past decade has become the state’s top legislative battleground.

Elsewhere this year, Democrats added one seat in the 1st district, which attracted the second heaviest spending; picked up two seats in the 11th, which ranked fourth; and grabbed one in the 16th, which ranked 6th among the top ten most expensive races. Races in three districts- 2, 1, and 38- were among the top ten most costly Assembly-only races of all time.

Table 4
Top Ten Most Expensive
Assembly-Only Campaigns by District

YEAR	DISTRICT	AMOUNT	AMOUNT-INFLATION ADJUSTED
2005	2	\$4,458,631	\$5,429,759
2015	2	\$4,978,234	\$4,978,234
2015	1	\$3,538,518	\$3,538,518
2009	1	\$2,410,257	\$2,672,037
2005	12	\$1,834,857	\$2,234,504
2005	14	\$1,827,804	\$2,225,915
2015	38	\$2,224,298	\$2,224,298
2005	11	\$1,742,488	\$2,122,017
1995	7	\$1,235,269	\$1,927,782
2009	5	\$1,722,450	\$1,909,526

Among independent special interest groups, a Democratic Super PAC called General Majority PAC reported the most direct spending in targeted districts- \$4.4 million. It was mostly financed by contributions from Garden State Forward, a Super PAC operated by the New Jersey Education Association, and other unions.

Table 5
Spending by General Majority
PAC in Targeted Districts*

DISTRICT	AMOUNT
2	\$ 2,034,388
1	\$ 1,779,457
38	\$ 393,741
11	\$ 234,118
TOTAL	\$ 4,441,704

*Based on latest independent expenditure reports.

Democratic candidates out-raised and out-spent Republicans and independents.

Table 6
Breakdown by Party
Through November 20, 2015

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT
Democrats	\$15,767,557	\$14,112,761
Independents	\$ 2,023	\$ 2,023
Republicans	\$ 6,470,626	\$ 5,629,134
ALL PARTIES	\$22,240,205	\$19,743,918

Incumbents from both parties also benefited from a huge fund-raising advantage. They raised more than three times more money than challengers, and spent more than twice as much.

Table 7
Breakdown of Incumbents and
Challengers through November 20, 2015

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT
Incumbents	\$17,158,265	\$14,715,137
Challengers	\$ 5,081,941	\$ 5,028,781
ALL CANDIDATES	\$22,240,205	\$19,743,918

Winning candidates had the biggest edge. They spent more than four times as much as losing candidates.

Table 8
Breakdown of Winners and
Losers through November 20, 2015

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT
Winners	\$18,352,681	\$15,914,839
Losers	\$ 3,887,524	\$ 3,829,079
ALL CANDIDATES	\$22,240,205	\$19,743,918

The numbers in this report should be considered preliminary. The analysis is based on legislative fundraising reports received by noon on November 30, 2015.

Reports filed by legislative candidates are available online on ELEC's website at www.elec.state.nj.us. A downloadable summary of data from those reports is available in both spreadsheet and PDF formats at www.elec.state.nj.us/publicinformation/statistics.htm.