



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
January 20, 2021

Annual Big Six Fund-Raising in 2020 Dips to New Low

Buffeted by short- and long-term trends, fund-raising by the Big Six political committees slumped to a new low in 2020, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

The two state parties and four legislative leadership committees together raised a total of \$4,260,928 in 2020. Looking back two decades to 2001, when the same committees raised an all-time high of \$41.7 million, no other year was lower.

Table 1
Annual Fund-Raising by
Big Six Committees

YEAR	RAISED	YEAR	RAISED
2001	\$41,736,031	2011	\$15,035,468
2002	\$14,796,069	2012	\$ 7,063,133
2003	\$30,091,484	2013	\$13,885,028
2004	\$10,641,399	2014	\$ 4,872,907
2005	\$19,277,696	2015	\$ 8,027,793
2006	\$ 7,211,937	2016	\$ 4,518,172
2007	\$19,177,655	2017	\$12,243,328
2008	\$ 6,653,676	2018	\$ 6,194,632
2009	\$12,368,082	2019	\$ 7,155,435
2010	\$ 6,180,605	2020	\$ 4,260,928

Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director, said fund-raising typically lags during federal election years like 2020. But he said he believes the COVID-19 pandemic likely made fund-raising even harder than normal. Plus, the committees have suffered a long-term decline due to other factors.

"Loss of contributions from contractors certainly is one big factor in the steady fund-raising downside by the Big Six," Brindle said.

An ELEC analysis released January 19 indicated that state pay-to-play laws reduced contributions by contractors by 94 percent during the 11-year period from 2009-2010 versus the 10-year stretch from 1999-2010. Contractors gave only \$1.4 million during the most recent decade compared to \$23.1 million during the earlier one.

Brindle said the growth of independent spending by special interest groups since about 2005 also has siphoned off contributions that earlier might have gone to the party committees.

ELEC has proposed legislative recommendations that would end restrictions on contractor donations to the Big Six committees, limit contractor donations to traditional political action committees (PACs), and require more disclosure by independent spending committees.

“Party committees are crucial to the electoral system. We must take steps to ease their financial plight,” Brindle said.

Compared to 2016, all Republican Big Six totals were lower. Democrats raised more funds in 2020 and reported larger cash reserves though Democratic spending was down.

Table 2
Campaign Finance Activity by
“Big Six” Committees in 2020

REPUBLICANS	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND	NET WORTH*
New Jersey Republican State Committee	\$ 944,020	\$ 920,688	\$ 158,852	\$ 158,852
Senate Republican Majority	\$ 334,100	\$ 320,283	\$ 42,641	\$ 42,641
Assembly Republican Victory	\$ 380,922	\$ 241,149	\$ 180,556	\$ 180,556
Sub Total – Republicans - 2020	\$1,659,042	\$1,482,120	\$ 382,049	\$ 382,049
Versus 2016 (Dollars)	\$2,028,489	\$1,626,724	\$1,042,740	\$1,011,826
Versus 2016 (Percent)	-22%	-10%	-173%	-165%
DEMOCRATS				
New Jersey Democratic State Committee	\$1,378,140	\$1,224,532	\$ 187,627	\$ 173,658
Senate Democratic Majority	\$ 408,254	\$ 348,886	\$ 448,942	\$ 428,942
Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee	\$ 815,492	\$ 487,072	\$ 359,767	\$ 329,328
Sub Total – Democrats - 2020	\$2,601,886	\$2,060,490	\$ 996,336	\$ 931,928
Versus 2016 (Dollars)	\$2,489,683	\$2,215,499	\$ 624,725	\$ 499,771
Versus 2016 (Percent)	4%	-8%	37%	46%
Both Parties				
Total - 2020	\$4,260,928	\$3,542,610	\$1,378,385	\$1,313,977
Versus 2016 (Dollars)	\$4,518,172	\$3,842,223	\$1,667,465	\$1,511,597
Versus 2016 (Percent)	-6%	-8%	-21%	-15%

*Net worth is cash-on-hand adjusted for debts owed to or by the committee.

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).