



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
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INDEPENDENT SPENDING IN LEGISLATIVE RACES ALREADY AT NEW HIGH; SPENDING IN THIRD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT IS TWICE PREVIOUS RECORD

Driven largely by the most expensive legislative election in state history in the 3rd district, spending by independent special interest committees already has eclipsed previous records with the November 7 election still looming, according to reports filed with the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Including the primary, there already has been \$21.5 million in independent spending on the 2017 legislative elections. That preliminary total represents a 33 percent increase over the previous high of \$16.1 million expended on the 2013 legislative election. The 2013 total is final.

Table 1
General Election Spending Independent Committees
(Numbers before 2017 are for Entire Election)

YEAR	PRIMARY	GENERAL	BOTH ELECTIONS	HOUSES RUNNING
2007	\$ 0	\$ 165,000	\$ 165,000	Senate, Assembly
2009	\$ 0	\$ 15,999	\$ 15,999	Assembly
2011	\$ 0	\$ 1,835,000	\$ 1,835,500	Senate, Assembly
2013	\$ 635,354	\$15,442,717	\$16,078,071	Senate, Assembly
2015	\$ 924,723	\$10,724,287	\$11,649,010	Assembly
2017*	\$2,160,923	\$19,318,361	\$21,479,284	Senate, Assembly

*Preliminary

“This level of independent spending in legislative elections is unprecedented. These groups are smashing previous spending records by leaps and bounds,” said Jeff Brindle, ELEC’s Executive Director.

“We hope the Legislature this fall recognizes the dominant influence of these groups acting independently of parties and candidates. Hopefully, they will enact legislation ELEC has recommended that would require full disclosure by independent spenders,” Brindle said.

Reports that reflect campaign finance activity through October 27, which is 11 days before the general election, show legislative candidates have raised \$36.9 million, spent \$22.8 million, and report \$14.1 million in cash reserves headed into the campaign’s final days. Overall spending to date in the general election, including independent committees, is \$42.1 million.

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Table 2
Campaign Finance Activity of Legislative
Candidates through October 27, 2017

GROUP	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Legislative Candidates	\$36,862,657	\$22,770,091	\$14,073,235
Independent Committees	NA	\$19,318,361	NA
TOTAL		\$42,088,452	

Independent special interest committees have been a major force in legislative races since 2011. But their involvement in previous races does not compare to what is happening this year in the 3rd district. Independent groups alone have spent about \$12.6 million in that race- more than they spent in all 40 legislative districts in 2015. About 65 percent of all independent spending this year is focused on the 3rd district.

Table 3
Projected Cost of 3rd District
Legislative General Election*

GROUP	AMOUNT	NOTE
Garden State Forward	\$ 4,525,234	Assumes all reported TV and digital ad outlays went to 3 rd District (86% of total reported spending)
New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow	\$ 3,975,204	
Candidate Spending	\$ 3,190,688	
General Majority PAC	\$ 2,045,293	Contributions to New Jerseyans
Carpenters Fund for Growth and Progress	\$ 1,250,500	Includes \$250,000 to General Majority
Better Education for Kids	\$ 357,347	
NJ Coalition of Real Estate	\$ 296,400	
Stronger Foundations Inc.	\$ 129,420	
Sub-Total- Spending to date	\$15,770,086	
Candidates- Cash-on-Hand	\$ 829,407	Assumes cash reserve is spent
PROJECTED TOTAL	\$16,599,493	

*May include expenditures reported through late-breaking 48-hour notices.

The projected \$16.6 million cost of the 3rd district race already is more than double the previous high- the \$6.1 million campaign in 2003 between Democratic Senator Fred Madden (D-4th) and Republican George Geist. In current dollars, it cost \$8.2 million.

Table 4
Independent Committee Spending on the 2017 Legislative Elections

GROUP	PRIMARY	GENERAL	BOTH ELECTIONS
General Majority PAC		\$ 6,443,512	\$ 6,443,512
Garden State Forward (New Jersey Education Association)	\$ 640,574	\$ 5,257,505	\$ 5,898,079
New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow	\$ 825,043	\$ 3,975,204	\$ 4,800,247
Stronger Foundations Inc (Operating Engineers Local 825)	\$ 285,100	\$ 1,225,105	\$ 1,510,205
Carpenters for Growth and Progress		\$ 1,250,500	\$ 1,250,500
Better Education for Kids Inc.*	\$ 80,726	\$ 357,347	\$ 438,073
NJ Coalition of Real Estate	\$ 15,000	\$ 358,188	\$ 373,188
Growing Economic Opportunities (Laborers)	\$ 158,491	\$ 84,556	\$ 243,047
Republican State Leadership Committee**		\$ 212,056	\$ 212,056
Opportunity for All		\$ 135,030	\$ 135,030
National Association of Realtors Fund	\$ 117,481		\$ 117,481
Local Government Voter Education	\$ 36,058		\$ 36,058
New Jersey Working Families		\$ 11,865	\$ 11,865
Food and Water Action		\$ 7,493	\$ 7,493
New Jersey Family First	\$ 2,450		\$ 2,450
TOTAL	\$2,160,923	\$19,318,361	\$21,479,284

*Also gave \$25,000 to Senate Democratic Majority

**Also gave \$25,000 to Senate Republican Majority

While the campaign in the 3rd legislative district has drawn the heaviest spending, four other districts that have been targeted by both parties in recent elections also are among the top five most expensive contests.

Table 5
Five Legislative Districts with Most Combined Candidate and Independent Spending

District	Candidates	Independent Committees	Total Spending
3	\$3,190,688	\$12,579,398	\$15,770,086
2	\$2,506,783	\$ 2,134,544	\$ 4,641,327
11	\$2,783,252	\$ 1,271,810	\$ 4,055,062
1	\$ 541,688	\$ 1,906,245	\$ 2,447,933
16	\$1,946,415	\$ 139,590	\$ 2,086,005

Looking solely at legislative candidate spending, ten districts have emerged as the state's most expensive. Sixty-nine percent of total spending has been done in those districts.

Table 6
Top Ten Districts through October 27, 2017
Ranked by Candidate Spending Only

DISTRICT	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
3	\$4,020,100	\$ 3,190,688	\$829,407
11	\$3,110,523	\$ 2,783,252	\$327,272
2	\$2,932,801	\$ 2,506,783	\$426,018
16	\$2,237,509	\$ 1,946,415	\$291,094
39	\$1,518,178	\$ 1,290,671	\$227,506
38	\$1,738,965	\$ 1,245,657	\$492,660
14	\$1,035,460	\$ 803,176	\$231,527
21	\$1,187,021	\$ 753,017	\$434,004
6	\$ 724,842	\$ 565,218	\$159,624
1	\$ 582,390	\$ 541,688	\$ 40,702
	SUBTOTAL-TOP TEN	\$15,626,566	
	ALL SPENDING	\$22,770,091	
	PERCENT TOP TEN	69%	

Democrats control 24 of 40 seats in the Senate, and 52 of 80 seats in the Assembly- 63 percent of all seats in the Legislature. They have outspent Republicans by a three-to-one margin, and have nearly four times more cash reserves.

Table 7
Party Breakdown of Legislative Campaign
Finance Activity through October 27, 2017

PARTY	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Democrats	\$28,045,413	\$16,992,633	\$11,050,534
Independent Candidates	\$ 14,987	\$ 13,167	\$ 2,113
Republicans	\$ 8,802,257	\$ 5,764,291	\$ 3,020,589
TOTAL	\$36,862,657	\$22,770,091	\$14,073,235

Incumbents have nearly five times more cash reserves than challengers, and have out-raised and spent them by large margins.

Table 8
Campaign Finance Activity
Incumbents Versus Challengers

GROUP	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Incumbents	\$ 26,951,122	\$ 15,033,933	\$11,899,239
Challengers	\$ 9,911,535	\$ 7,736,158	\$ 2,173,996
TOTAL	\$ 36,862,657	\$ 22,770,091	\$14,073,235

Assembly candidates have out-raised and out-spent Senate candidates. Senate candidates have more cash-on-hand.

Table 9
Campaign Finance Activity by Legislative House

GROUP	RAISED	SPENT	CASH-ON-HAND
Senate Candidates	\$17,792,724	\$10,410,784	\$7,380,812
Assembly Candidates	\$19,069,933	\$12,359,307	\$6,692,423
ALL CANDIDATES	\$36,862,657	\$22,770,091	\$14,073,235

The numbers in this report should be considered preliminary. Numbers for candidates are taken from 11-day pre-election fundraising reports received by noon October 31, 2017. They reflect activity through October 27.

Numbers for independent committees are compiled from a combination of independent spending reports, 48-hour notices, political committee and political action committee reports filed through November 1.

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

Several, but not all, independent groups also file reports with ELEC. These reports can be searched at <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/ELECReport/SearchIndExp.aspx>. Some also disclose their activities in reports made public by the Internal Revenue Service at www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Political-Organizations.

ELEC also can be accessed on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NJElectionLaw) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/elecny).

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