



# White Paper No. 25

## **Top Local Elections in New Jersey – A Tale of Two Cities and More**

[www.elec.state.nj.us](http://www.elec.state.nj.us)

January, 2015



*State of New Jersey*

**RONALD DEFILIPPIS**  
Chairman

**WALTER F. TIMPONE**  
Vice Chairman

**AMOS C. SAUNDERS**  
Commissioner

## **ELECTION LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**

Respond to:  
P.O. Box 185  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185  
(609) 292-8700 or Toll Free Within NJ 1-888-313-ELEC (3532)  
Website: <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/>

**JEFFREY M. BRINDLE**  
Executive Director

**JOSEPH W. DONOHUE**  
Deputy Director

**DEMERY J. ROBERTS**  
Legal Director

**AMY F. DAVIS**  
Compliance Director

**EDWIN R. MATTHEWS**  
Legal Counsel

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Commissioners would like to thank the various staff members involved in this report, which is the 25<sup>th</sup> white paper released by the New Jersey Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) since 1988.

This series has received national and even international recognition, and its contents often have been cited in media reports, the political science literatures, studies prepared by sister agencies and advocacy groups.

Besides serving as reference works, the reports also provide valuable background and guidance for the Governor's Office, legislators and other policymakers.

Deputy Director Joseph W. Donohue is the author of White Paper 25, "Top Local Elections in NJ- A Tale of Two Cities and More."

General editors and proofreaders included Executive Director Jeffrey M. Brindle, Director of Information Technology Carol Neiman, Compliance Director Amy F. Davis and Research Associate Steven Kimmelman. Director of Finance and Administration Christopher Mistichelli checked many of the numbers.

Administrative Assistant Elbia L. Zeppetelli also helped with proofreading, and brought her usual finesse to formatting the final version.

A special thanks to Todd J. Wojcik, Director of Campaign Financing, and Clerk Igor Milewski. Todd and Igor arranged for the retrieval of dozens of boxes of older paper reports in an off-site storage facility to help verify candidate totals, and helped track down several spools of microfiche that also were critical for research of early campaigns. Todd also helped with proofreading.

All 25 white papers are available on ELEC's website at [www.elec.state.nj.us](http://www.elec.state.nj.us). For earlier research into local campaign finance trends and valuable historical background on municipal elections in the state, see these two reports by Director Brindle: White Paper 18: "Local Campaign Financing: An Analysis of Trends in Communities Large and Small (2005)." and White Paper 14: "Local Campaign Financing (2000)."

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## SUMMARY

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- ✓ Newark, New Jersey's largest city by population and the 67th largest nationally, has dominated the top local races during the past 40 years. Since 1974, the four most expensive races, based on inflation adjusted numbers, all took place in "Brick City." Seven of the top 25 all-time local races occurred there (Page 13).
- ✓ While Newark has had the most expensive elections, Jersey City, the state's second most populous municipality, has had more (9 versus 7) among the top 25 all-time races (Page 13). The most expensive Jersey City race cost \$7.6 million in inflation adjusted dollars and ranks sixth among all elections. It took place in 2001, when Glenn Cunningham became the city's first African-American mayor.
- ✓ Together, Newark and Jersey City had 16 of the top 25 costliest local elections. Hoboken was the only other city in the top 25. The 2009 campaign in Hoboken cost \$3.1 million and ranked 25<sup>th</sup> (Page 13).
- ✓ Disregarding inflation, the 2014 Newark election, in which Councilman Ras Baraka defeated former assistant state Attorney General Shavar Jeffries, was the most expensive local election ever (\$12.6 million). Adjusting for inflation, it was surpassed only by the 2006 Newark election, which was equal to \$13.4 million in 2014 dollars (Page 2).
- ✓ The 2014 election was especially notable because it signaled a new era in local New Jersey politics when several independent groups spent a combined \$5.5 million (Page 3). That was nearly 22 times more than the previous record in a local election (excluding independent spending on ballot questions) (Page 4).
- ✓ The involvement of independent groups has led to a sharp change in the pattern of spending, notably a major increase in mass media spending. Eighty-two percent of all independent spending went to media, primarily for either TV or radio. By contrast, candidates spent just 31 percent of their budgets on media (Page 6).
- ✓ Six of the other top 25 local elections took place in counties. The most expensive county election occurred in Bergen County in 2002, when Dennis McNerney defeated state Sen. Henry McNamara. The race cost \$10.1 million in inflation adjusted dollars and ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among all elections (Page 14).
- ✓ No candidate individually spent more than Jerramiah Healy, who sank \$3.5 million into a 2009 election in which he won reelection as Jersey City's mayor (Page 15).
- ✓ Former Newark Mayor Cory Booker, who mostly raised funds using joint committees, appears to be the most prolific local fundraiser of all time. His committees raised and spent more than \$20 million on five Newark elections (Page 17).
- ✓ The most spent on a local ballot question was the \$1.2 million outlay by supporters and opponents of a 2010 proposal to allow private operation of Trenton's water supply (Page 18).
- ✓ In the three decades between 1985 and 2014, the most spending on local elections occurred in 2002 at \$60.1 million (inflation adjusted)(Page 20). A total of \$763 million has been spent on municipal and county elections during those three decades (Page 22).

# NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

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Since the 1970s, Newark has been one of the state's biggest political battlegrounds. So much so it inspired the documentary film "Street Fight" about the 2002 campaign.

All four campaigns between 2002 and 2014 topped \$10 million in inflation adjusted dollars. They are the top four most costly local elections ever held in New Jersey.

No other municipality has come close in terms of overall spending on elections, according to the first-ever attempt by ELEC to rank the most expensive local races since 1974.

The 2006 Newark campaign, which topped \$13.4 million factoring in inflation, was the most expensive local election ever in New Jersey.

Yet it was the \$12.6 million campaign in 2014 that really stands apart. It brought a major new dimension to local politics in New Jersey- the emergence of independent groups not under the direct control of parties or candidates. Those groups also are beginning to dominate politics nationally and at the state level.

**Table 1**  
**Top 10 Most Expensive**  
**Local Races in New Jersey**

| LOCATION      | YEAR | TYPE      | AMOUNT<br>(UNADJUSTED) | AMOUNT<br>(IN 2014<br>DOLLARS) | KEY RACE  |
|---------------|------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Newark        | 2006 | Municipal | \$11,437,051           | \$13,439,543                   | Cory Booker defeats Ronald Rice for mayor.              |
| Newark        | 2014 | Municipal | \$12,562,933           | \$12,562,933                   | Ras Baraka defeats Shavar Jeffries for mayor.           |
| Newark        | 2002 | Municipal | \$ 8,692,816           | \$11,437,916                   | Mayor Sharpe James defeats Cory Booker.                 |
| Newark        | 2010 | Municipal | \$ 9,827,153           | \$10,670,090                   | Mayor Cory Booker defeats Clifford Minor.               |
| Bergen County | 2002 | General   | \$ 7,667,682           | \$10,089,055                   | Dennis McNerney defeats Henry McNamara for Executive.   |
| Jersey City   | 2001 | Municipal | \$ 5,655,735           | \$ 7,561,143                   | Glenn Cunningham defeats Tom DeGise to become mayor.    |
| Jersey City   | 2009 | Municipal | \$ 5,889,743           | \$ 6,500,820                   | Mayor Jerramiah Healy defeats Louis Manzo.              |
| Jersey City   | 1989 | Municipal | \$ 3,041,000           | \$ 5,803,435                   | Gerald McCann defeats Glenn Cunningham to become mayor. |
| Essex County  | 1978 | General   | \$ 1,514,107           | \$ 5,505,844                   | Peter Shapiro defeats Robert Notte to Become Executive. |
| Jersey City   | 2013 | Municipal | \$ 5,269,015           | \$ 5,354,690                   | Steven Fulop defeats Jerramiah Healy for mayor.         |

## NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

These so-called “outside” groups spent a total of \$5.5 million during the election year alone- an unprecedented 44 percent of the full four-year election cycle spending for 2014 (Newark candidates run every four years). By contrast, candidates spent \$7 million – 56 percent.

No previous municipal election had ever drawn anything close to that much spending by independent groups. One group alone- Newark First- spent just under \$4.5 million on the campaign. The biggest spending candidate committee spent less than half that sum.

**Table 2**  
**Spending on Four-Year Election Cycle for 2014 Newark Municipal Election**

| CANDIDATE OR JOINT CANDIDATE COMMITTEE NAME   | SPENT               | PERCENT    |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Jeffries, Caraballo, Amador, Gonzalez, Waters, Ramos, Speight, Lloyd, Bankston, and Logan | \$ 2,164,729        |            |
| Booker, Gonzalez, Onque, Green and Cobb Latham  | \$ 1,577,638        |            |
| Crump, Council, James, McCallum, Chaneyfield-Jenkins, Osborne, and Lopez                  | \$ 829,071          |            |
| Baraka, Ras*  | \$ 603,118          |            |
| Quintana, Luis  | \$ 281,814          |            |
| Amador, Augusto   | \$ 278,937          |            |
| Ramos, Anibal   | \$ 242,250          |            |
| Sharif, Darrin  | \$ 152,691          |            |
| 28 other Candidate Committees that Spent Less than \$100,000 each                         | \$ 683,049          |            |
| Runoff  | \$ 169,070          |            |
| Local Parties   | \$ 73,001           |            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL-CANDIDATES AND PARTIES</b>  | <b>\$ 7,055,368</b> | <b>56</b>  |
| <b>INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES</b>   |                     |            |
| Newark First  | \$ 4,465,486        |            |
| Working Families Organization   | \$ 410,001          |            |
| Newark Families for Progress  | \$ 285,591          |            |
| NJ Workers Voices   | \$ 163,361          |            |
| American Federation of Teachers   | \$ 109,996          |            |
| Committee for Economic Growth and Social Justice  | \$ 73,130           |            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL- INDEPENDENT SPENDING</b>   | <b>\$ 5,507,565</b> | <b>44</b>  |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$12,562,933</b> | <b>100</b> |

\*Subtracts funds transferred to next election.

Newark First was chiefly funded by Education Reform Now, a New York City-based group and is a major advocate of privately run charter schools. It supported former assistant state Attorney General Shavar Jeffries and opposed Councilman Ras Baraka, who won the election.

Education Reform Now also backed Newark Families for Progress, another independent group.

## **NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN**

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On the other side of the debate and siding with Baraka were Working Families Organization, NJ Workers Voices, American Federation of Teachers and Committee for Economic Growth and Social Justice.

How significant was the independent spending in this year's Newark election?

It was nearly 22 times larger than the \$251,629 spent by Better Education for New Jersey's Kids Inc. in the 2013 Jersey City election. That outlay was considered the largest previous example of independent spending in a New Jersey local election not involving a ballot question.

### **NEWARK CAMPAIGN SPENDING TOPS INFLATION**

The cost of campaigning in Newark has risen even more than the rate of inflation since 1974.

The 1974 campaign cost \$489,411, or nearly \$2.4 million when adjusted for inflation. By comparison, the 2014 campaign cost \$12.6 million.

The difference is 434 percent, which is higher than the rise in cost of living over the 40-year period of 381 percent.

There are various reasons why the cost of elections in Newark is higher than in other municipalities. For one thing, there is a mayor and nine council members. That can easily lead to two dozen or more candidates in a major election year. Like other non partisan May Municipal election cities, Newark has runoff elections to decide close races, which further boosts the cost of the election.

Newark also is the state's largest city, meaning candidates have to send out more mail and knock on more doors than in other cities. Newark also is located in the New York media market, one of the most expensive in the country. And unlike small municipalities, it bids out millions of dollars of public contracts annually that act like cat nip to some contributors.



## NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

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**Table 3**  
**Rising Cost of Elections in Newark**

| YEAR | TOTAL SPENDING<br>IN 2014 DOLLARS | CHANGE-<br>2014 VS 1974 | COST OF LIVING-<br>2014 VS 1974 |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1974 | \$ 2,352,938                      |                         |                                 |
| 1978 | \$ 1,941,509                      |                         |                                 |
| 1982 | \$ 2,328,669                      |                         |                                 |
| 1986 | \$ 3,453,095                      |                         |                                 |
| 1990 | \$ 3,835,665                      |                         |                                 |
| 1994 | \$ 3,007,663                      |                         |                                 |
| 1998 | \$ 4,746,786                      |                         |                                 |
| 2002 | \$11,437,916                      |                         |                                 |
| 2006 | \$13,439,543                      |                         |                                 |
| 2010 | \$10,670,090                      |                         |                                 |
| 2014 | \$12,562,933                      | 434                     | 381                             |

### **2014 ELECTION: EXPENSIVE AND MEDIA DRIVEN**

The candidates of decades past would barely recognize today's campaigns.

For one thing, independent groups are increasingly becoming involved in local politics, a trend likely to accelerate. Candidates and committees spend their money differently today than in the past. And candidates of three decades ago would be stunned by the overall price tag.

Newark candidates and committees spent \$12.6 million over the four-year, 2014 election cycle. In dollars unadjusted for inflation, it was the most expensive local campaign in history. Even accounting for inflation, it ranks second only behind the 2006 Newark election.

ELEC analyzed \$9.8 million of that spending. This total represents nearly all election year spending, and 80 percent of total spending for the full four-year election cycle.

To allow an apples-to-apples comparison with spending in the 1982 Newark election (see page 9), which includes only election year spending, the analysis left out \$914,690 spent by several incumbents in the three years leading up to the election.

# NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

It also omitted about \$1.6 million raised and spent by former Mayor Cory Booker and his slate, nearly all of it before 2014. Booker announced in December 2012 that he was running for U.S. Senate.<sup>1</sup> He won that campaign on October 16, 2013 and stepped down as mayor on October 31, 2013.<sup>2</sup>

The involvement of independent groups may have led to the most media-driven local election in state history. Sixty percent of total expenditures were for media.

**Table 4**  
**Major Categories of Spending**  
**in 2014 Newark Elections**

| CATEGORY                    | AMOUNT             | PERCENT    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Election Day/GOTV*          | \$1,740,179        | 18         |
| Media                       | \$5,903,217        | 60         |
| Miscellaneous               | \$2,130,597        | 22         |
| Transfer to Future Campaign | \$ 64,848          | 1          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$9,838,842</b> | <b>100</b> |

\*GOTV means get out the vote.

Independent committees spent a far higher percentage of their campaign dollars on media (82%) than candidates (31%). On a percentage basis, candidates spent twice as much (25% versus 12%) on get-out-the-vote and Election Day activities than independent groups.

**Table 5**  
**Major Areas of Spending by Independent Committees**  
**and Candidates in 2014 Newark Elections**

| CATEGORY           | INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES | PERCENT    | CANDIDATES         | PERCENT    | TOTALS             | PERCENT    |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| Election Day/GOTV* | \$ 670,508             | 12         | \$1,069,671        | 25         | \$1,740,179        | 18         |
| Media              | \$4,540,280            | 82         | \$1,362,937        | 31         | \$5,903,217        | 60         |
| Misc               | \$ 296,777             | 5          | \$1,833,820        | 42         | \$2,130,597        | 22         |
| Transfer           | NA                     | NA         | \$ 64,848          | 1          | \$ 64,848          | 1          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>      | <b>\$5,507,565</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>\$4,331,276</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>\$9,838,842</b> | <b>100</b> |

\*GOTV means get out the vote.

<sup>1</sup> Marc Santora and Raymond Hernandez, "Booker Studies Bid for Senate, Not Governor," New York Times, December 21, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Ted Sherman, "Booker Formally Resigns as Newark Mayor; Letter Reflects on 'Incredible Positive Change,' Continued Progress," The Star-Ledger, October 31, 2013.

## NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

Candidates also spent a far higher proportion of their spending on overhead and other miscellaneous expenses (42% versus 5%) while 1 percent of candidate funds was transferred to the next election.

Of the \$5.9 million spent by candidates and independent groups on all forms of media, \$4.8 million was identified as television, radio or “media” advertisements (see Table 6). Most media buys are for television or radio spots, though they also can be part of a package that includes other forms of advertising.

**Table 6**  
**Breakdown of Expenses Identified as Television, Radio**  
**or Media Advertising in 2014 Newark Elections**

| COMMITTEE                          | MEDIA            | RADIO ADS        | TV ADS             | TV/RADIO ADS     | TOTALS             | TYPE        |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Newark First                       | \$ 27,000        | \$150,000        | \$3,280,000        |                  | \$3,457,000        | Independent |
| Working Families                   |                  |                  |                    | \$398,000        | \$ 398,000         | Independent |
| Jeffries Team                      | \$352,110        |                  |                    |                  | \$ 352,110         | Candidate   |
| Baraka, Ras                        | \$229,155        | \$ 21,529        | \$ 22,478          |                  | \$ 273,162         | Candidate   |
| Newark Families                    | \$220,000        |                  |                    |                  | \$ 220,000         | Independent |
| American Federation of Teachers    |                  | \$ 84,000        |                    |                  | \$ 84,000          | Independent |
| Economic Growth and Social Justice |                  |                  | \$ 41,000          |                  | \$ 41,000          | Independent |
| Quintana, Luis                     |                  |                  | \$ 12,262          |                  | \$ 12,262          | Candidate   |
| Correia, Luis                      |                  |                  | \$ 4,200           |                  | \$ 4,200           | Candidate   |
| Bradford, Patricia                 |                  |                  | \$ 4,175           |                  | \$ 4,175           | Candidate   |
| Bey, Maryam                        |                  |                  | \$ 3,116           |                  | \$ 3,116           | Candidate   |
| Chaneyfield Jenkins, Gayle         |                  |                  | \$ 1,000           |                  | \$ 1,000           | Candidate   |
| Brito, Rafael                      |                  | \$ 300           |                    |                  | \$ 300             | Candidate   |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                 | <b>\$828,265</b> | <b>\$255,829</b> | <b>\$3,368,231</b> | <b>\$398,000</b> | <b>\$4,850,325</b> |             |

While candidate media expenditures were higher than in earlier decades, independent groups concentrated most of their spending on major media buys.

## NEWARK - THE HISTORIC 2014 CAMPAIGN

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**Table 7**  
**Comparison of Spending on Television,**  
**Radio or Media Advertising**

| TYPE               | INDEPENDENT        | PERCENT<br>OF TOTAL | CANDIDATE        | PERCENT<br>OF TOTAL | TOTAL              |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| TV Ads             | \$3,321,000        |                     | \$ 47,231        |                     | \$3,368,231        |
| Media              | \$ 247,000         |                     | \$581,265        |                     | \$ 828,265         |
| TV/Radio Ads       | \$ 398,000         |                     | NA               |                     | \$ 398,000         |
| Radio Ads          | \$ 234,000         |                     | \$ 21,829        |                     | \$ 255,829         |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b> | <b>\$4,200,000</b> | <b>87</b>           | <b>\$650,325</b> | <b>13</b>           | <b>\$4,850,325</b> |

### **1982 VERSUS 2014- MAJOR CHANGES IN HOW CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES SPEND THEIR MONEY**

The year 1982 was filled with challenges and milestones.

A short but brutal recession gripped the nation in the same year Great Britain battled Argentina over the Falkland Islands. Ronald Reagan was serving his second year as president. “ET” was a major box office success, the Weather Channel made its appearance on cable television and the first computer virus, called “Elk Cloner,” started a dastardly trend that still plagues cyberspace.<sup>3</sup>

In New Jersey, Tom Kean had just taken office as governor. He was greeted with his most difficult year as a revenue shortfall forced budget cuts and increases in the income, sales and gasoline taxes.<sup>4</sup>

In Newark, Kenneth Gibson, elected as the city’s first African American mayor in 1970, won his fourth term. He fended off a challenge from Earl Harris, the city council president.

The 1982 race cost an estimated \$1,156,890. In 2014 dollars, it tallied \$2.8 million.

Incumbent Gibson spent \$567,000- nearly \$1.4 million in 2014 dollars. Harris spent at least \$169,129, or \$414,532 in today’s dollars.

A detailed breakdown was performed on the nearly \$1.2 million in total spending. The following table gives the results.

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<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia.com chronology for 1982.

<sup>4</sup> Jill Pollack, “Taxes Rise by \$350 Million,” Trenton Evening Times, January 1, 1983.

**Table 8**  
**Major Categories of Spending**  
**in 1982 Newark Elections**

| CATEGORY                    | AMOUNT             | PERCENT    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Miscellaneous               | \$ 538,982         | 47         |
| Media                       | \$ 484,756         | 42         |
| Election Day/GOTV*          | \$ 132,446         | 11         |
| Transfer to Future Campaign | \$ 706             | 0.1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$1,156,890</b> | <b>100</b> |

\*GOTV means get out the vote

Miscellaneous includes meals, rent, contributions made to charities or other candidates, supplies, utilities, and repayment of loans.

Even though 1982 was the year Time Magazine featured a computer as its Man of the Year,<sup>5</sup> a breakdown of media costs shows candidates relied overwhelmingly on paper to distribute their messages.

It would be years before websites, robocalls and digital advertising became a part of local campaigns.

**Table 9**  
**Breakdown of Media Costs in**  
**1982 Newark Elections**

| CATEGORY                 | AMOUNT           | PERCENT    |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Mail/Printing            | \$236,704        | 49         |
| Signs                    | \$ 85,438        | 18         |
| Radio Advertisements     | \$ 55,735        | 11         |
| Newspaper Advertisements | \$ 45,333        | 9          |
| Advertising- Misc.       | \$ 37,322        | 8          |
| Billboards               | \$ 24,224        | 5          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>\$484,756</b> | <b>100</b> |

### **THE 2014 NEWARK ELECTION VERSUS THE 1982 ELECTION**

In comparing the cost of the 2014 and 1982 Newark elections, the most telling factor is the explosion of media spending.

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<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia.com chronology for 1982.

## NEWARK – 2014 VS 1982

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If the \$484,756 spent on media in 1982 was adjusted for inflation, the same amount of media spending would cost nearly \$1.2 million today. Media spending in the 2014 election exceeded \$5.9 million- nearly five times more.

Media costs today take up a far bigger share of spending compared to the 1982 campaign budget- 60 percent versus 42 percent.

Money spent on Election Day and get-out-the-vote activities also is up substantially from 1982 (\$1.7 million versus \$132,446) and is higher on a percentage basis (22% versus 11%).

**Table 10**  
**Major Categories of Spending**  
**2014 Versus 1982 Newark Elections**

| <b>CATEGORY</b>             | <b>2014</b>        | <b>PERCENT</b> | <b>1982</b>        | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Miscellaneous               | \$2,130,597        | 18             | \$ 538,982         | 47             |
| Media                       | \$5,903,217        | 60             | \$ 484,756         | 42             |
| Election Day/GOTV*          | \$1,740,179        | 22             | \$ 132,446         | 11             |
| Transfer to Future Campaign | \$ 64,848          | 1              | \$ 706             | 0.1            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$9,838,842</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>\$1,156,890</b> | <b>100</b>     |

\*GOTV means get out the vote

While miscellaneous expenses were up in total dollars spent (nearly \$2.1 million versus about \$538,982), they were down sharply on a percentage basis (18% versus 47%).

Miscellaneous includes meals, fundraising, rent, polling, contributions made to charities or other candidates, supplies, utilities, consulting and repayment of loans.

One caveat: miscellaneous totals may be inflated because candidate descriptions of their expenses aren't always clear. Is a consultant, for instance, hired to do polling, fundraising, political strategy, or GOTV? Candidates often don't say. When the purpose of the expense was not obvious, it was placed in miscellaneous.

A detailed look at media expense shows stark differences (See Table 11).

No Newark candidates or committees reported using television advertisements in 1982.

## NEWARK – 2014 VS 1982

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At least \$3.4 million was spent in 2014- nearly 57 percent of the media total.

Radio advertisements did play a significant role in campaigns in 1982. Candidates spent a combined \$55,735 on radio buys- nearly 11 percent of their media budgets.

While it was impossible to break out the cost of all radio buys in 2014, those strictly identified as such totaled \$255,829. That is a significant jump from 1982. But on a percentage basis, it is a small portion of current media outlays (4%).

Mail and printed literature continues to play an important role in campaigns. But its percentage of the media budget fell from 49 percent to 13 percent even though total dollars more than tripled.

Campaign spending on signs, newspaper advertisements and billboards all reflected significant drops both in dollars and as a percentage of overall spending.

Clearly, paper is passé in the digital age.

Another sign of this shift- while there were no outlays for online ads, websites or robocalls in 1982, they represent a small but indispensable part of modern campaigns.

**Table 11**  
**Breakdown of Media Costs-**  
**2014 Versus 1982 Newark Elections**

| <b>CATEGORY</b>             | <b>2014</b>        | <b>PERCENT</b> | <b>1982</b>      | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Television Advertising      | \$3,368,231        | 57             | NA               | NA             |
| Advertising- Not Identified | \$ 931,397         | 16             | \$ 37,322        | 8              |
| Mail/Printing               | \$ 775,622         | 13             | \$236,704        | 49             |
| TV/Radio Ads- Combined Buy  | \$ 398,000         | 7              | NA               | NA             |
| Radio Advertisements        | \$ 255,829         | 4              | \$ 55,735        | 11             |
| Signs                       | \$ 98,184          | 2              | \$ 85,438        | 18             |
| Online                      | \$ 39,711          | 1              | NA               | NA             |
| Newspaper Advertisements    | \$ 20,818          | 0.4            | \$ 45,333        | 9              |
| Billboards                  | \$ 7,756           | 0.1            | \$ 24,224        | 5              |
| Website                     | \$ 4,857           | 0.1            | NA               | NA             |
| Robocalls                   | \$ 2,812           | 0.05           | NA               | NA             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$5,903,217</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>\$484,756</b> | <b>100</b>     |

# **JERSEY CITY – ANOTHER LOCAL CAMPAIGN EPICENTER**

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## **JERSEY CITY- ANOTHER SETTING FOR MAJOR ELECTIONS**

While Newark has hosted the largest local elections in state history, Jersey City, the state's second most populous municipality, has had nine campaigns extending from 1977 to 2009 that ranked in the top 25 while Newark has seven ranging from 1986 through 2014 (See Table 12 below).

Like Newark, Jersey City has a large population that is highly diverse, resides in a major media market, holds elections that typically attract dozens of candidates, has runoff elections in addition to regular municipal elections and has a big budget and lots of contracts.

The most costly election took place in 2001, when former council member Glenn Cunningham defeated former council President Tom DiGise.

The 2001 Jersey City election cost an estimated \$7.6 million in inflation adjusted dollars. But the campaign had added significance besides being the city's most expensive race.

Cunningham, who later became a state senator, became the first African-American mayor in Jersey City history.



# JERSEY CITY – ANOTHER LOCAL CAMPAIGN EPICENTER

**Table 12**  
**Top 25 Most Expensive Local Races in New Jersey**

| R<br>A<br>N<br>K | LOCATION      | YEAR | TYPE      | AMOUNT<br>(UNADJUSTED) | AMOUNT<br>(IN 2014<br>DOLLARS) | KEY RACE  |
|------------------|---------------|------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1                | Newark        | 2006 | Municipal | \$11,437,051           | \$13,439,543                   | Cory Booker defeats Ronald Rice for mayor.                |
| 2                | Newark        | 2014 | Municipal | \$12,562,933           | \$12,562,933                   | Ras Baraka defeats Shavar Jeffries for mayor.             |
| 3                | Newark        | 2002 | Municipal | \$ 8,692,816           | \$11,437,916                   | Mayor Sharpe James defeats Cory Booker.                   |
| 4                | Newark        | 2010 | Municipal | \$ 9,827,153           | \$10,670,090                   | Mayor Cory Booker defeats Clifford Minor.                 |
| 5                | Bergen County | 2002 | County    | \$ 7,667,682           | \$10,089,055                   | Dennis McNerney defeats Henry McNamara for executive.     |
| 6                | Jersey City   | 2001 | Municipal | \$ 5,655,735           | \$ 7,561,143                   | Glenn Cunningham defeats Tom DeGise to become mayor.      |
| 7                | Jersey City   | 2009 | Municipal | \$ 5,889,743           | \$ 6,500,820                   | Mayor Jerramiah Healy defeats Louis Manzo.                |
| 8                | Jersey City   | 1989 | Municipal | \$ 3,041,000           | \$ 5,803,435                   | Gerald McCann defeats Glenn Cunningham for mayor.         |
| 9                | Essex County  | 1978 | County    | \$ 1,514,107           | \$ 5,505,844                   | Peter Shapiro defeats Robert Notte for Executive.         |
| 10               | Jersey City   | 2013 | Municipal | \$ 5,269,015           | \$ 5,354,690                   | Steven Fulop defeats Jerramiah Healy for mayor.           |
| 11               | Bergen County | 1986 | County    | \$ 2,374,662           | \$ 5,128,860                   | William McDowell defeats Matthew Feldman for executive.   |
| 12               | Newark        | 1998 | Municipal | \$ 3,265,789           | \$ 4,746,786                   | Mayor Sharpe James defeats Ronald Rice And Mildred Crump. |
| 13               | Essex County  | 2002 | County    | \$ 3,203,840           | \$ 4,215,579                   | Joseph DiVincenzo defeats Thomas Giblin for executive.    |
| 14               | Newark        | 1990 | Municipal | \$ 2,117,287           | \$ 3,835,665                   | Mayor Sharpe James, Unopposed, Reelected.                 |
| 15               | Jersey City   | 1997 | Municipal | \$ 2,554,639           | \$ 3,767,904                   | Bret Schundler defeats Jerramiah Healy for mayor.         |
| 16               | Jersey City   | 1985 | Municipal | \$ 1,658,324           | \$ 3,652,696                   | Anthony Cucci defeats Gerald McCann for mayor.            |
| 17               | Jersey City   | 1981 | Municipal | \$ 1,347,568           | \$ 3,509,292                   | Gerald McCann defeats Walter Sheil for mayor.             |
| 18               | Newark        | 1986 | Municipal | \$ 1,598,783           | \$ 3,453,095                   | Sharpe James defeats Mayor Kenneth Gibson.                |
| 19               | Essex County  | 1986 | County    | \$ 1,558,418           | \$ 3,365,914                   | Nicholas Amato defeats Executive Peter Shapiro.           |
| 20               | Bergen County | 2010 | County    | \$ 3,092,145           | \$ 3,357,378                   | Kathleen Donovan defeats Executive Dennis McNerney        |
| 21               | Jersey City   | 1977 | Municipal | \$ 855,638             | \$ 3,342,336                   | Thomas FX Smith defeats William Macci for mayor.          |
| 22               | Jersey City   | 2005 | Municipal | \$ 2,720,386           | \$ 3,297,438                   | Mayor Jerramiah Healy defeats Melissa Holloway.           |
| 23               | Camden County | 1994 | County    | \$ 1,981,926           | \$ 3,166,016                   | Michael McLaughlin defeats Sheriff William Simon.         |
| 24               | Essex County  | 1994 | County    | \$ 1,972,253           | \$ 3,150,564                   | James Treffinger defeats Cardell Cooper for executive.    |
| 25               | Hoboken       | 2009 | Municipal | \$ 2,845,551           | \$ 3,140,785                   | Peter Cammarano defeats Dawn Zimmer for mayor.            |

## **SOME COUNTIES ALSO SPENDING BIG**

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### **COUNTY CAMPAIGNS ALSO DRAW BIG BUCKS**

While Newark and Jersey City had 16 of the top 25 most expensive local races, eight county races also made the list.

Three occurred in Bergen County (1986, 2002, 2010), four in Essex County (1978, 1986, 1994, 2002) and one in Camden County (1994).

The most costly county showdown occurred in 2002, when Democrat Dennis McNerney defeated Republican state Sen. Henry McNamara for county executive.

At \$10.1 million in 2014 dollars, it was nearly twice as expensive as the next costliest county race.

The Bergen County race was unusual because of heavy involvement from out-of-county committees, particularly among Democrats. It resulted in an unusually large and late breaking wave of spending against McNamara.

The next costliest race also is the oldest county race among the top 25. It occurred in 1978, when Democrat Peter Shapiro defeated Republican Robert Notte to become Essex County Executive. In inflation adjusted dollars, the campaign topped \$5.5 million.

One Camden County campaign slipped into the top 25 (it was 24<sup>th</sup>). It was distinctive in that all the other county campaigns on the list featured county executive showdowns. The 1994 Camden County campaign was headlined by a sheriff's election.

In that \$3.2 million contest, Democrat Michael McLaughlin upset Democrat-turned-Republican Sheriff William Simon.

## TOP INDIVIDUAL SPENDERS

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Many candidates in recent elections have conducted their campaigns using joint committees, particularly mayoral and council candidates. Joint committees can raise more money than individual committees, and they consolidate fundraising efforts, saving time and money.

There have been some municipal and county campaigns where individual candidates raised and spent large sums on their own.

The largest known individual spender was former Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy. Healy spent \$3.2 million- about \$3.5 million in today's dollars- winning reelection in 2009.

Technically, the \$2.1 million raised by former Essex County Executive Thomas D'Alessio ranks as the second largest campaign fund ever amassed by a local candidate. Raised for the 1994 election, it would be valued at \$3.3 million in 2014 dollars.

However, D'Alessio ended up resigning from office and never ran for reelection due to an indictment and conviction on money laundering and extortion charges.<sup>6</sup> He was allowed by ELEC to redistribute his remaining funds to charities, other candidates or contributors.<sup>7</sup>

In what stands as the second most expensive municipal campaign, the 2002 Newark election, Mayor Sharpe James spent \$2 million (not counting transfers to his future campaign)- the equivalent of \$2.7 million. James ranks as the third largest spender individually.

James also is believed to be the first local candidate to spend more than \$1 million running for office. Running unopposed, he spent \$1,054,807 on his 1990 election- an amount equal to \$1.9 million in 2014 dollars.

Former Democratic state Senator Matthew Feldman, who ranks fourth, spent the equivalent of \$2.2 million seeking the Bergen County executive post in 1986 but lost to Republican Sheriff William McDowell.

Rounding out the top 5 is former Jersey City Mayor Gerald McCann, who spent the equivalent of \$1.9 million on the 1989 mayoral contest, which he won.

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<sup>6</sup> Diane C. Walsh, "Former Essex Exec Sentenced to 46 Months for Extortion," The Star-Ledger, September 15, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Diane C. Walsh, "Essex Ex-Exec Must Yield Campaign Accounts," The Star-Ledger, June 15, 1994.

## TOP INDIVIDUAL SPENDERS

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**Table 13**  
**Top 5 Largest Individual Spenders**  
**Among Local and County Candidates**

| CANDIDATE         | YEAR | LOCATION         | OFFICE              | AMOUNT-<br>UNADJUSTED<br>FOR<br>INFLATION | AMOUNT-<br>ADJUSTED<br>FOR<br>INFLATION |
|-------------------|------|------------------|---------------------|---|---|
| Healy, Jerramiah  | 2009 | Jersey City      | Mayor               | \$3,173,564                               | \$3,505,593                             |
| D'Alessio, Thomas | 1994 | Essex            | County<br>Executive | \$2,091,879                               | \$3,341,660                             |
| James, Sharpe     | 2002 | Newark           | Mayor               | \$2,026,115                               | \$2,665,941                             |
| Feldman, Matthew  | 1986 | Bergen<br>County | County<br>Executive | \$1,033,844                               | \$2,232,924                             |
| McCann, Gerald    | 1989 | Jersey City      | Mayor               | \$1,014,878                               | \$1,936,790                             |

### **FUNDRAISING THROUGH JOINT COMMITTEES**

While former Newark Mayor Cory Booker mostly raised his money through joint committees that he shared with other candidates, he clearly was the main draw on the ticket.

No local candidate has shown such prolific fundraising ability.

In five Newark elections ranging from 1998 to 2014, committees overseen by Booker spent more than \$20.5 million.

The Booker Team in 2006 raised \$7.2 million, or \$8.4 million adjusting for inflation, which appears to be the most any committee has raised for a local election in New Jersey.

## BALLOT QUESTIONS ALSO DRAW BIG BUCKS

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**Table 14**  
**Spending by Fundraising Committees**  
**Controlled by Cory Booker**

| CANDIDATE    | YEAR | LOCATION | AMOUNT-<br>UNADJUSTED<br>FOR<br>INFLATION* |
|--------------|------|----------|--|
| Booker Team  | 2006 | Newark   | \$ 7,189,185                               |
| Booker Team  | 2010 | Newark   | \$ 7,741,964                               |
| Booker Team  | 2002 | Newark   | \$ 3,075,335                               |
| Booker Team  | 2014 | Newark   | \$ 1,577,638                               |
| Booker, Cory | 2002 | Newark   | \$ 856,991                                 |
| Booker, Cory | 1998 | Newark   | \$ 80,129                                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |      |          | <b>\$20,521,242</b>                        |

\*Not including transfers to following election.

Aside from what he raised for Newark campaigns, he went on to raise \$17.5 million for his U.S. Senate elections in 2013 and 2014.<sup>8</sup>

### **WATER SUPPLIES, BLUE LAWS AND INCINERATORS- SPENDING ON LOCAL BALLOT INITIATIVES**

Ballot initiatives in New Jersey are not as prevalent as in some states like California, where public referenda typically can draw tens of millions of dollars in spending pro and con.

At both the state and local levels in New Jersey, spending has been modest. The most expensive statewide referendum, which in 1976 allowed casinos in Atlantic City, cost nearly \$1.4 million, or nearly \$5.6 million in 2014 dollars.

No local referenda have drawn even a quarter of that spending.

Only two local ballot question votes cost more than \$1 million on an inflation adjusted basis. Coincidentally, both took place in Mercer County.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.politicalmoneyline.com](http://www.politicalmoneyline.com) query on 12/29/2014.

## **BALLOT QUESTIONS ALSO DRAW BIG BUCKS**

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Research indicates the largest was the \$1.2 million (inflation adjusted) spent in 2010 mostly to promote a ballot question that would have allowed a private water company to assume control of Trenton's water supply.

The main supporter, The Committee for Trenton Yes (New Jersey American Water Company) outspent opponents heavily- \$1.2 million versus just under \$7,000 in reported spending by Stop The Sale, a coalition of local residents.

Despite the lopsided outlays, the proposed \$80 million sale was rejected by nearly 80 percent of local voters.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the larger investment paid off for opponents of a proposed referendum in 1988 that would have required deposits up to 25 cents on all beverage containers sold in Mercer County.

Mercer Citizens for Recycling Committee, a coalition of businesses and private citizens opposed to the so-called bottle bill, spent nearly \$1.1 million (inflated adjusted). Friends of the Bottle Bill spent the equivalent of just \$64,320. The public question was defeated 3-1.<sup>10</sup>

Spending was more even but the results also were lopsided in 1993 when Bergen County voters considered a repeal of the county's long-time ban on Sunday shopping.

Vote Yes for Sunday Shopping, a coalition of retailers, advocated the Blue Law repeal, while Vote No-Vote Informed Bergen opposed the public question. They spent a combined \$895,646 in 2014 dollars. County residents rejected the repeal by more than 80,000 votes.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Meir Rinde, "Voters Sink Water Deal," Trenton Times, June 16, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Booth, "Voters Defeat Bottle Bill 3-1," Trenton Times, November 9, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Mumma, "Sunday Shopping Just Didn't Sell- Blue Law Repeal Doomed from the Start," The Record, November 4, 1993.

## BALLOT QUESTIONS ALSO DRAW BIG BUCKS

**Table 15**  
**Top 10 Costliest County and**  
**Municipal Ballot Questions**

| COMMITTEE  | LOCATION          | YEAR         | SPENT<br>AT THE<br>TIME | SPENT<br>(IN 2014<br>DOLLARS) |
|--|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Committee for Trenton Yes                            | Trenton           | 2010         | \$1,098,502             |                               |
| Stop The Sale  | Trenton           | 2010         | \$ 6,297                |                               |
|  |                   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$1,104,799</b>      | <b>\$1,199,565</b>            |
| Mercer Citizens for Recycling Committee              | Mercer County     | 1988         | \$ 532,318              |                               |
| Friends of The Bottle Bill                           | Mercer County     | 1988         | \$ 32,160               |                               |
|  |                   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$ 564,478</b>       | <b>\$1,128,956</b>            |
| Vote Yes for Sunday Shopping Committee               | Bergen County     | 1993         | \$ 325,344              |                               |
| Vote No-Vote Informed Bergen                         | Bergen County     | 1993         | \$ 221,000              |                               |
|  |                   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$ 546,344</b>       | <b>\$ 895,646</b>             |
| Westinghouse Monmouth County Resource Management Inc | Monmouth County   | 1991         | \$ 479,983              | \$ 834,753                    |
| JCPL Committee                                       | Aberdeen Township | 1995         | \$ 277,453              | \$ 430,828                    |
| Union City Children First                            | Union City        | 2004         | \$ 335,320              | \$ 420,201                    |
| Property Tax Relief for Moorestown                   | Moorestown        | 2011         | \$ 361,727              | \$ 380,765                    |
| Responsible People Vote No                           | Elizabeth         | 1999         | \$ 232,598              | \$ 330,395                    |
| Citizens for An Affordable Government                | Toms River        | 2002         | \$ 178,060              | \$ 234,289                    |
| Vote Yes for Our Schools                             | Elizabeth         | 2000         | \$ 160,117              | \$ 220,243                    |

### LOCAL SPENDING TRENDS UPWARD

Statistics compiled since 1985 show that spending on municipal and county elections, after adjustments for inflation, has risen steadily though not dramatically over the last three decades.

In nominal dollars (unadjusted for inflation), spending increased from \$171 million between 1985 and 1994 to \$333 million between 2005 and 2014. That represents a 94 percent increase between the two decades.

But the increase is not as big as it seems. When the two decades are compared using actual buying power, it drops to just 16 percent.

## LOCAL SPENDING TRENDS UPWARD

**Table 16**  
**Spending on County and**  
**Municipal Elections by Decade**

| PERIOD                      | TOTAL- NO<br>INFLATION<br>ADJUSTMENT | PERCENT<br>INCREASE<br>2005-2014 VS<br>1984-1994 | TOTAL-<br>ADJUSTED FOR<br>INFLATION | PERCENT<br>INCREASE<br>2005-2014 VS<br>1984-1994 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2005-2014                   | \$332,835,046                        | 94   | \$365,926,873                       | 16   |
| 1995-2004                   | \$259,500,877                        |  | \$357,478,146                       |  |
| 1985-1994                   | \$171,174,630                        |  | \$316,527,640                       |  |
| <b>Average<br/>Per Year</b> | <b>\$ 25,450,352</b>                 |  | <b>\$ 34,664,422</b>                |  |

On an inflated adjusted basis, the average spent on municipal and county elections during the past 30 years was nearly \$35 million.

Interestingly, in the eight years when total spending topped \$40 million (inflation adjusted) major campaigns occurred in either Newark or Jersey City. Clearly, the costly non-partisan, May Municipal campaigns in those two cities help explain the major yearly fluctuations in overall spending on local campaigns. Also, campaigns in Bergen and Essex Counties, which also tend to be expensive, take place during same years as Newark's mayoral election.

**Table 17**  
**Combined Spending on County and**  
**Municipal Elections Ranked by Year**

| YEAR | TOTAL-<br>NO INFLATION<br>ADJUSTMENT | TOTAL-<br>ADJUSTED FOR<br>INFLATION | MAJOR MAY<br>MUNICIPAL<br>ELECTION |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2002 | \$45,691,414                         | \$60,120,282                        | Newark                             |
| 2006 | \$47,014,631                         | \$55,246,335                        | Newark                             |
| 2005 | \$39,389,074                         | \$47,744,332                        | Jersey City                        |
| 2010 | \$40,228,861                         | \$43,679,545                        | Newark                             |
| 1994 | \$26,595,513                         | \$42,484,845                        | Newark                             |
| 2014 | \$41,974,127                         | \$41,974,127                        | Newark                             |
| 2001 | \$31,116,760                         | \$41,599,947                        | Jersey City                        |
| 1990 | \$22,386,481                         | \$40,555,219                        | Newark                             |

The peak year for local spending occurred in 2002, when it topped \$60 million in 2014 dollars.



## LOCAL SPENDING TRENDS UPWARD

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That total, along with those from other years, show that spending on municipal and county campaigns is significant even though historically it has not received as much attention as statewide campaigns.

The 2002 total exceeded totals for all state legislative races between 2001 and 2011. But it was less than the record \$73.5 million spent on the 2013 legislative elections due in part to heavy influx of independent spending.

The peak year for local spending also was more than all gubernatorial elections except the 2005 and 2009 campaigns, which were unusual due to unprecedented levels of self-financing by candidates.

**Table 18**  
**Comparison of Most Expensive**  
**Election Years in New Jersey**

| TYPE          | YEAR | TOTAL-<br>UNADJUSTED | TOTAL IN<br>2014 DOLLARS |
|---------------|------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Local         | 2002 | \$ 45,691,414        | \$ 60,120,282            |
| Legislative   | 2013 | \$ 72,363,846        | \$ 73,540,494            |
| Gubernatorial | 2005 | \$ 87,724,988        | \$ 106,333,319           |

During the past 30 years, spending on municipal and county elections topped \$763 million, excluding spending on local ballot questions (See Table 19 below).

While May Municipal contests in Newark and Jersey City dominated the election rankings, the majority of county and municipal governments rely on June primaries and November general elections to elect their officials.

Spending in general election campaigns neared \$427 million, or 56 percent of all spending on local campaigns.

May municipal races were the next largest (21%), followed by primaries (19%), school board elections (3%) and runoffs (2%).

## LOCAL SPENDING TRENDS UPWARD

**Table 19**  
**Spending on County and**  
**Municipal Elections by Year\***

| YEAR           | SCHOOL<br>BOARDS    | MAY<br>MUNICIPAL     | RUNOFFS             | PRIMARIES            | GENERAL              | TOTAL                |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2014           | \$ 713,349          | \$ 17,109,195        | \$ 1,635,397        | \$ 8,151,242         | \$ 14,364,944        | \$ 41,974,127        |
| 2013           | \$ 668,706          | \$ 5,405,694         | \$ 390,332          | \$ 7,645,129         | \$ 13,761,299        | \$ 27,871,160        |
| 2012           | \$ 890,317          | \$ 1,917,271         | \$ 0                | \$ 4,781,629         | \$ 10,461,975        | \$ 18,051,192        |
| 2011           | \$ 1,532,896        | \$ 2,614,118         | \$ 0                | \$ 6,335,900         | \$ 17,243,093        | \$ 27,726,007        |
| 2010           | \$ 922,009          | \$ 12,252,253        | \$ 202,357          | \$ 10,933,931        | \$ 15,918,311        | \$ 40,228,861        |
| 2009           | \$ 1,365,683        | \$ 8,257,673         | \$ 908,643          | \$ 7,010,509         | \$ 15,408,037        | \$ 32,950,545        |
| 2008           | \$ 1,242,057        | \$ 2,978,762         | \$ 45,451           | \$ 4,228,810         | \$ 15,462,449        | \$ 23,957,529        |
| 2007           | \$ 952,667          | \$ 2,878,373         | \$ 214,624          | \$ 10,213,427        | \$ 19,412,829        | \$ 33,671,920        |
| 2006           | \$ 1,249,311        | \$ 19,513,579        | \$ 695,479          | \$ 7,941,317         | \$ 17,614,945        | \$ 47,014,631        |
| 2005           | \$ 906,521          | \$ 5,963,133         | \$ 1,486,184        | \$ 7,459,561         | \$ 23,573,675        | \$ 39,389,074        |
| 2004           | \$ 1,011,427        | \$ 3,777,563         | \$ 0                | \$ 4,487,863         | \$ 18,162,670        | \$ 27,439,523        |
| 2003           | \$ 771,341          | \$ 2,707,717         | \$ 181,432          | \$ 6,652,403         | \$ 18,198,974        | \$ 28,511,867        |
| 2002           | \$ 909,700          | \$ 12,806,223        | \$ 1,261,307        | \$ 9,632,981         | \$ 21,081,203        | \$ 45,691,414        |
| 2001           | \$ 584,579          | \$ 5,910,607         | \$ 2,504,402        | \$ 4,927,861         | \$ 17,189,311        | \$ 31,116,760        |
| 2000           | \$ 630,481          | \$ 3,143,226         | \$ 197,639          | \$ 3,590,297         | \$ 14,462,488        | \$ 22,024,131        |
| 1999           | \$ 764,018          | \$ 2,384,371         | \$ 76,265           | \$ 5,326,911         | \$ 16,994,552        | \$ 25,546,117        |
| 1998           | \$ 626,276          | \$ 8,292,634         | \$ 623,593          | \$ 4,238,305         | \$ 13,412,371        | \$ 27,193,179        |
| 1997           | \$ 489,454          | \$ 4,017,293         | \$ 489,956          | \$ 3,396,535         | \$ 10,238,967        | \$ 18,632,205        |
| 1996           | \$ 411,979          | \$ 2,202,229         | \$ 107,325          | \$ 2,452,830         | \$ 10,309,048        | \$ 15,483,411        |
| 1995           | \$ 618,973          | \$ 2,376,908         | \$ 30,446           | \$ 2,664,280         | \$ 12,171,663        | \$ 17,862,270        |
| 1994           | \$ 369,761          | \$ 4,335,391         | \$ 859,437          | \$ 4,944,092         | \$ 16,086,832        | \$ 26,595,513        |
| 1993           | \$ 286,401          | \$ 2,951,047         | \$ 105,127          | \$ 2,604,399         | \$ 10,888,257        | \$ 16,835,231        |
| 1992           | \$ 175,912          | \$ 1,586,664         | \$ 99,648           | \$ 2,554,349         | \$ 10,593,093        | \$ 15,009,666        |
| 1991           | \$ 309,715          | \$ 1,632,051         | \$ 0                | \$ 2,780,855         | \$ 13,312,176        | \$ 18,034,797        |
| 1990           | \$ 218,736          | \$ 5,515,454         | \$ 644,412          | \$ 3,051,737         | \$ 12,956,142        | \$ 22,386,481        |
| 1989           | \$ 242,395          | \$ 3,371,073         | \$ 840,569          | \$ 2,130,957         | \$ 10,708,456        | \$ 17,293,450        |
| 1988           | \$ 235,366          | \$ 2,456,249         | \$ 81,801           | \$ 1,351,173         | \$ 8,747,733         | \$ 12,872,322        |
| 1987           | \$ 180,111          | \$ 1,272,039         | \$ 4,983            | \$ 2,154,223         | \$ 10,837,253        | \$ 14,448,609        |
| 1986           | \$ 213,612          | \$ 4,636,251         | \$ 154,479          | \$ 1,062,696         | \$ 10,023,209        | \$ 16,090,247        |
| 1985           | NA                  | \$ 2,287,298         | \$ 712,055          | \$ 1,393,937         | \$ 7,215,024         | \$ 11,608,314        |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>\$19,493,753</b> | <b>\$156,552,339</b> | <b>\$14,553,343</b> | <b>\$146,100,139</b> | <b>\$426,810,979</b> | <b>\$763,510,553</b> |
| <b>PERCENT</b> | <b>3</b>            | <b>21</b>            | <b>2</b>            | <b>19</b>            | <b>56</b>            | <b>100</b>           |

\*Does not include spending on ballot questions.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## RECOMMENDATION ONE:

**More Disclosure by Independent Special Interest Groups-** Since 2010, the bipartisan Election Law Enforcement Commission has been urging state officials to adopt broader disclosure rules for independent groups.

In its recent comparison of disclosure requirements among the states, the National Institute on Money in State Politics gave New Jersey a score of 40 out of a maximum of 120.<sup>12</sup>

Only eight states- Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin- scored lower. Eleven states got the top score- Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Rhode Island, Texas, and Utah.

Executive Director Jeff Brindle has outlined potential elements of a legislative reform bill and several bills have been introduced that have borrowed from his recommendations.

**Table 20**  
**How Disclosure Would Change for Independent Groups**  
**Under ELEC Legislative Proposal**

| Independent Spenders that Explicitly Urge a Candidate's Election or Defeat Must Disclose | CURRENT                              | PROPOSED |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Contributions</b>   | Infrequent***                        | Yes*     |
| <b>Expenditures</b>  | Yes                                  | Yes      |
| Independent Spenders that Use Issue Ads to Promote or Attack Candidates                  |                                      |          |
| <b>Contributions</b>   | Infrequent and not before election** | Yes*     |
| <b>Expenditures</b>  | Infrequent and not before election** | Yes      |

\* ELEC proposal would require disclosure only for contributions above \$5,000.

\*\* Some groups have disclosed campaign-related contributions and spending through grass roots lobbying reports filed months after the campaign. Also, ballot questions essentially are issues settled by elections. Political committees that support or oppose ballot questions have always fully disclosed their contributions and expenses.

\*\*\* Some independent groups do fully disclose because they file their reports as political committees.

The enormous independent spending in the 2014 Newark election was unusual in that most of the details were disclosed voluntarily by the participating groups.

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Quist, "Scorecard: Essential Disclosure Requirements for Independent Spending, 2014," National Institute on Money in State Politics, December 3, 2014.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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However, detailed disclosure of contributions and expenses by independent groups is not currently mandated by New Jersey law.

For example, about \$11 million of \$38 million spent on the 2013 state campaigns (excluding ballot questions) omitted detailed contributions or expenses. Another \$3.7 million revealed just expenses.

So nearly 38 percent of the spending in 2013 state elections came with zero or limited disclosure. ELEC is asking only that independent groups abide by the same rules now followed by candidates and parties.

### **RECOMMENDATION TWO:**

**Detailed Expenditure Information Provided by Local Candidates and Parties should be available in a searchable online database-** Electronic facsimiles of disclosure reports filed by all state, county and local candidates and committees are readily accessible via ELEC's website.

In addition, ELEC also makes available a searchable database of contributions. The database includes some contributions dating back to the 1981 governor's race. Local contributions are a recent addition.

ELEC began making local contributions searchable in 2009. ELEC lacks, however, a database of candidate and committee expenditures. Currently, the agency's computer system is on the verge of a major overhaul.

Within a few years, the goal is to have all candidates file their disclosure reports electronically. Once that happens, it will be relatively easy to extract contribution and expense details from all reports and compile them into databases.

There is no reason why reports filed by local candidates should be excluded. Expanded access to expense data will make analysis easier and help assess the impact of campaign finance laws.

Since these laws are intended to be self-enforcing, there will be greater incentive for candidates not to misuse their campaign funds since expenses will be easier for the public and others to check.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## **RECOMMENDATION THREE:**

### **Broaden the governmental activities law to include lobbying of local governmental entities-**

The fact that local elections are attracting millions of dollars in political contributions hints at the growing importance of local government. But it isn't just elections that are drawing big bucks.

There are indications that lobbying of local officials also has become a multi-million-dollar enterprise. Since the bulk of local lobbying may involve lucrative local contracts, the public deserves to know who is deploying lobbyists to try to win those contracts.

While some lobbyists who register with ELEC voluntarily disclose their efforts to influence local officials, current law does not require such disclosure. Current law requires only disclosure of efforts to lobby state officials.

State regulated lobbyists file quarterly reports that inform the public of their latest activities, and annual reports that list their clients, fees and other information.

Legislation should be approved to require that lobbyists paid to influence local officials also register and file similar disclosure reports.

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