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## Cuomo Amasses \$30 Million War Chest

By SHANE GOLDMACHER JAN. 17, 2018

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo raised an average of more than \$32,000 per day for the last six months, according to campaign finance reports, and has now amassed a \$30.5 million campaign chest in 2018 that so far has helped him scare away serious rivals in his bid for a third term.

Mr. Cuomo received donations from an array of wealthy individuals and companies, from big Albany lobbying shops to real estate developers, from Hollywood moguls to the pharmaceutical industry. Many of the donors have business dealings with the state.

New York maintains caps on donations — \$65,100 is the maximum Mr. Cuomo can receive from an individual — but the limits and rules are some of the loosest of any state with such restrictions.

Mr. Cuomo took full advantage. He collected \$129,200 from the hedge fund manager Joseph DiMenna and his wife, \$50,000 from the billionaire philanthropist Eli Broad, \$25,000 from the Hollywood executive Jeffrey Katzenberg and his wife, and \$30,000 from Barry Diller, the billionaire businessman. Last week, a trio of limited liability companies linked to the address of Brookfield Properties gave Mr. Cuomo a total of \$150,000. Three of the nation's biggest accounting firms, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, combined to give Mr. Cuomo \$100,000 last week, as well.

Mr. Cuomo, a prodigious fund-raiser who has long preferred collecting fewer big checks to cultivating a small-donor base, raised only 0.2 percent of his money from donors who gave less than \$200. His overall average contribution was more than \$4,800.

A new poll from Siena University on Tuesday showed Mr. Cuomo as the most popular politician in the state, with a 62 percent favorability rating, and the backing of 76 percent of Democrats and 41 percent of Republicans.

The combination of Mr. Cuomo's cash and polling strength has proved daunting for would-be challengers.

The top Republican recruit, Harry Wilson, pulled out of the race but Brian Kolb, the Assembly minority leader, and Joel Giambra, a former lobbyist and Erie County executive, remain as Republican hopefuls. But while Mr. Giambra is seeking the Republican nomination, his latest campaign report revealed he had given money to the chairman of the New York Democratic Party as recently as November. Among Democrats, Terry Gipson, a former state senator, is running, and reported raising a meager \$6,000.

Whoever runs against him, Mr. Cuomo is almost certain to attempt to run up his margins in a show of strength, both for a third term in Albany, and as a potential presidential candidate in 2020.

But while the governor's race has been slow to develop, there has been a swirl of intrigue in the undercard contest of lieutenant governor in the last 48 hours.

First, Jumaane Williams, a city councilman from Brooklyn, announced on Monday he is looking to challenge Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, who served as Mr. Cuomo's running mate in 2014. Then, in a Tuesday morning, the governor's top aide, Melissa DeRosa, declined to confirm that Ms. Hochul would run again, saying she would "let her make that announcement."

Hours later, the mayor of Rochester, Lovely Warren, an African-American woman, was floated as a potential new Cuomo running mate. Ms. Warren said she had not been contacted by the governor's office and praised Ms. Hochul while saying she would "not comment on speculation from Albany."

By the end of the day, Ms. Hochul's spokeswoman, Haley Viccaro, said that Ms. Hochul "fully intends to run for re-election as lieutenant governor."

For his part, Mr. Cuomo spent most of the last six months squirreling away his cash, operating with a lean political staff dedicated mostly to raising more money. He spent \$1.3 million since July but that figure is deceptively inflated.

His single largest expenditure was giving away old donations from Harvey Weinstein. On Tuesday, Mr. Cuomo donated the \$111,400 he has received over the years from the disgraced Hollywood producer, who faces numerous accusation of sexual misconduct, to a group called Women's Justice Now.

Mr. Cuomo spent another \$140,000 on polling, split between two firms, Global Strategy Group and Central Marketing Inc.

He also spent big on splashy fund-raising events, including a blowout 60th birthday party last month where former President Bill Clinton and Jon Bon Jovi appeared. Mr. Cuomo reported more than \$229,000 in spending on the event at Cipriani Wall Street. He spent nearly \$30,000 at Madison Square Garden, where he held a fund-raiser at a Paul McCartney concert last September, and \$11,000 with the New York Mets, where he also held an event.

Most of Mr. Cuomo's spending was more mundane: more than 100 Uber, Lyft and taxi rides and 45 trips to Duane Reade. Docks Oyster Bar, the seafood restaurant downstairs from the governor's Manhattan office, is a frequent campaign haunt, with 15 visits, including a \$1,118.43 meal tab one day last August.