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Unaffiliated voters remain key part of South Jersey electorate

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By STEVEN LEMONGELLO Staff Writer |

Political parties go to great lengths to get their message across to an important segment of voters, not Democrats or Republicans, who make up the biggest slice of the electorate in most parts of South Jersey.

Unaffiliated voters, however, have become fewer since the middle of the last decade.

“One of the most interesting trends is the pretty uniform decline of unaffiliated voters,” said David Carr, a senior fellow at the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Richard Stockton College. “That is quite unusual and quite uniform.”

In Atlantic County, for example, the number of unaffiliated registrations has dropped 15 percent since 2005, despite a 4 percent growth in total registrations, while Cape May County has seen a drop of 10 percent since 2005. (Cumberland managed a 4 percent increase in unaffiliated voters, while no past party numbers were available from Ocean County.)

“Over the years, I think there’s been a trend towards greater independent registration,” Carr said. “It reflects a stronger polarization taking

