

## Message or Money?

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“I don’t know if I truly am fearless,” Edward Durr remarked to an NJ.com reporter, “or stupid.”

“Because who in their right mind would take on a person with that kind of power and clout?” he asked rhetorically, before he answered, “But his power, his clout, did not scare me.”

Durr, a Republican, is the 58-year-old truck driver who last Tuesday defeated one of the most powerful politicians in New Jersey, State Senate President Steve Sweeney, a Democrat.

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Durr has never before held public office and spent just a smidgen over \$2,000 in the entire race. His campaign video was filmed on his smartphone.

On the other hand, Sweeney was the longest serving legislative leader in the Garden State’s history. The powerful teachers’ union



attempted to take Sweeney out four years ago, spending a whopping \$5 million, but he still won handily by 18 percentage points.

Was it a conservative-leaning district? This southern Jersey district “has reliably elected a Democrat since its creation in 1973, save for one year when the Democratic incumbent switched parties,” reported *The New York Times*.

At Reason, Rob Soave called it “one of the biggest political upsets in American history,” offering this important takeaway: “Durr’s victory is another reminder that for all the pearl clutching about money in politics, contemporary American campaigns are less determined by big piles of cash — to pay for massive ad blitzes, expensive consultants, and the like — than ever.”

Clearly, message meant more than money.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.