

Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS - WASHINGTON

Elster v. City of Seattle

Supreme Court of Washington - July 11, 2019 - P.3d - 2019 WL 3024110

Property owners brought § 1983 action against city challenging constitutionality of democracy voucher program, under which city used property tax revenue to provide vouchers to registered municipal voters and qualifying residents, who could then give their vouchers to qualified municipal candidates to redeem for campaign purposes.

The Superior Court dismissed suit. Owners appealed. The Court of Appeals certified case.

The Supreme Court held that democracy voucher program did not violate free speech clause.

City's democracy voucher program, under which city used property tax revenue to provide vouchers to registered municipal voters and qualifying residents, who could then give their vouchers to qualified municipal candidates to redeem for campaign purposes, did not violate free speech clause; program did not alter, abridge, restrict, censor, or burden speech, nor did it force association between taxpayers and any message conveyed by program.