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Look Ahead America v. Stark County Board of Elections

Supreme Court of Ohio - July 18, 2024 - N.E.3d - 2024 WL 3447280 - 2024-Ohio-2691

Political advocacy group filed complaint against county board of elections and its individual members alleging that board violated Open Meetings Act by entering executive sessions at four meetings to discuss purchase of voting equipment.

Following advocacy group's case-in-chief at bench trial, the Court of Common Pleas dismissed the case. Advocacy group appealed. The Fifth District Court of Appeals affirmed. The Supreme Court accepted advocacy group's discretionary appeal.

The Supreme Court held that premature-disclosure clause of statute governing executive sessions of a public body applied to all permissible reasons for entering executive session, and, thus, remand was necessary for trial court to apply that interpretation.

Premature-disclosure clause of statute governing executive sessions of a public body applied to all permissible reasons for entering executive session, including purchase of property for public purpose, and, thus, remand was necessary for trial court to apply that interpretation of the statute, following dismissal of political advocacy group's action alleging that county board of elections' executive sessions violated the Open Meetings Act.