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Date: 6/15/2017

Subject: Money in Politics: Campaign Finance Reform Blast #13

From: League of Women Voters® of Boulder County

Campaign Finance Reform Blast

Blast #13

15 June 2017

Update on Seattle's Democracy Vouchers Program
Publicly financed campaigns come in different varieties, and Seattle's Democracy Vouchers will be an interesting example.

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Democracy Vouchers at Work

In the first year of Seattle's Democracy Vouchers Program, officially qualified candidates have raised \$200,000 worth of contributions, so far, according to [Natalie Brand of King 5 TV](#).

Seattle residents can receive \$100 in Democracy Vouchers to support candidate(s) of their choice. This year, the vouchers can only be used for the two at-large Seattle council races and the city attorney's race. The program will apply to the mayoral race in 2021.

The Democracy Voucher Program aims to encourage more Seattle residents to donate to campaigns and/or run for elected positions themselves. In particular, millennial voters and new Seattle residents are being encouraged to participate.

Seattle is the first city in the nation to try this type of public campaign financing. The vouchers are funded through a property tax and designed to increase engagement, especially among those who wouldn't otherwise donate cash to a political campaign. In November 2015, Seattle voters approved a maximum property tax of \$3 million per year to fund the Democracy Voucher Program for the next 10 years. The Democracy Voucher Program costs the average homeowner about \$11.50 per year.

While still early in the election cycle, the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission reports that 15,803 vouchers have been returned, and 4,343 Seattle residents have participated so far. The number of individual contributors in the at-large council races is already up around 15% compared to 2015, the last year those races were on the ballot.

For more complete information about Seattle's Democracy Voucher Program, visit the Democracy Voucher website: <http://www.seattle.gov/democracvoucher/about-the-program>

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The League of Women Voters® is a non-partisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. The League influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of Boulder County
Box 21274
Boulder, Colorado 80308

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