

20. New Section 5.XX- Campaign Finance

Charter Review Committee

Amendment Summary Section 5.XX (New Section)

Brief Summary of Amendment

- Adds a new section 5.XX to Article V, to specify that the City has the authority, to the extent consistent with state and federal law, to enact ordinances to limit campaign contributions and expenditures and to create public campaign financing by democracy vouchers.
- Allows but does not require enactment of ordinances related to limitations on campaign contributions and expenditures and to create a public financing program.

Committee Vote

Yes: Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Jason Gauthier, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, Steve Wamback, Diamatris Winston, Lok Yin Wu

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Andre Jimenez

Amendment

NEW SECTION. Section 5.XX - In order to combat the potential for, and appearance of, corruption, and to preserve the ability of all qualified community members to run for public office, the City Council may, in so far as is permitted by state and federal law, enact ordinances designed to limit contributions and expenditures by, or on behalf of, candidates for City elected office. Such ordinances may include but are not limited to:

- a) limitations on the amount, time, place, and source of financial and in-kind contributions to candidates, candidate committees and campaigns; and
- b) financial or non-financial incentives in support of voluntary limitations on candidate, and candidate committee, and campaign expenditures; and
- c) development of public financing of campaigns, including democracy vouchers.

If enacting such ordinances, the Mayor and Council shall appoint an Elections Commission or delegate an existing body to determine campaign contribution limits and lobbying regulations and to oversee the creation and implementation of such ordinances.

Amendment Positions

Rationale for Amendment:

Creating a campaign finance section with language that supports the option to implement public financing and create an Election Commission would work to improve public trust in elections. It also encourages democratic innovations that empower residents to support campaigns and run for office. Seattle's success with Democracy Vouchers can serve as a model for Tacoma. Public financing ensures a more varied candidate pool and democratizes campaign funding by increasing voter engagement and diversity in donations. The amendment follows the advice of local and national election reform groups that recommend the establishment of an Election Commission to ensure informed decision-making, equity, and transparency. The Commission could study and prepare public fundraising plans while fostering accountability and citizen engagement. By passing this proposed amendment, the City shows its support for enhancing representation, strengthening democracy, and building a more equitable future for all Tacomans.

Dissenting Position(s):

None