

Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4010
PO Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729

Re: 2026 District 5 Special Election

August 28, 2025

Dear Commissioners,

We write to you in advance of the September 3, 2025 meeting of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, during which you will be discussing the implementation of the Democracy Voucher Program in the upcoming District 5 2026 special election.

As organizations and community leaders committed to equitable electoral participation in Seattle, we strongly support and encourage the Commission to adopt the following measures:

1. Maintain program consistency for voters with four \$25 vouchers totaling \$100.

Seattle voters are accustomed to receiving four \$25 Democracy Vouchers each year. Keeping this same structure during the special election will minimize confusion, build on existing public awareness, and ensure residents clearly understand how to participate. The \$100 total value also strikes a reasonable balance: it gives candidates a strong financial incentive to participate in the program, while keeping the number of vouchers needed to run a viable campaign within reach.

2. Limit voucher distribution to District 5 residents.

In keeping with the spirit of district elections, only residents of District 5 should be eligible to use vouchers in this special election. This approach rightly ensures that it is the people of District 5 who choose their representative. Restricting voucher use to the district strengthens the link between voters, candidates, and community accountability.

3. Invest in trusted community-based outreach.

We strongly support the allocation of \$100,000 for public grants to community organizations focused on civic education. Historically, participation in District 5 has lagged, and supporting organizations with deep roots and proven trust within D5 is essential for effectively reaching underrepresented communities. These outreach grants should not only be prioritized in this special election—they should be the norm in every election. Many Seattle residents remain unfamiliar with how the Democracy Voucher Program works, and trusted community

organizations are critical to ensuring all residents have the knowledge and support they need to participate fully.

Taken together, these steps will strengthen public trust and ensure the Democracy Voucher Program continues to serve as a national model for expanding participation and achieving truly inclusive local elections.

Thank you for your leadership in stewarding this vital program and for your attention to the needs of District 5 residents during the upcoming 2026 special election.

Sincerely,

People Powered Elections Washington Coalition

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Denisse Guerrero, Director Advocacy, Washington Community Alliance

Mary Nguyen, Executive Director, Washington Community Action Network

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