

**Goodall, Jannette**

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**From:** Fishkin, Joseph R <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 20, 2018 2:34 PM  
**To:** 2018 Charter Review  
**Subject:** vouchers

Dear Charter Review Commission,

I read in the Austin Monitor about your exploration of the possibility of investing city funds in a program modeled on the Seattle Democracy Vouchers program. I teach at UT Law and write about elections and campaigns. I wanted to write to you just to encourage you to find a way to implement this idea. Voucher programs, if well designed, can have two different beneficial effects: first, they encourage more active participation by citizens – awarding your voucher to a candidate is an important form of participation. Second, they may alter the incentives of those considering running for office (or for re-election!) because they create a playing field in which candidates are rewarded for doing things that appeal to ordinary citizens, not only wealthy campaign donors.

I would encourage you to design the program in such a way that the qualifications for candidates to participate are as light as possible. Do not be tempted to make it hard for candidates to participate -- for a program like this to work, you want as high a proportion of candidates participating as possible.

Good luck!  
J

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