

From: Vote No 'Till You Know ; Save Renton Library and Renton Citizens

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### **On The Question of the Government's Role in Creating and Distributing Election Material**

We are initiating steps to ask the courts to restore our rights to a fair election free of government influence.

Over the past few months, both Vote No 'Till You Know ; Save Renton Library and Renton For King County Library System ran spirited campaigns for their viewpoints. Those campaigns are over and after a very close election, KCLS won the majority ending over 90 years of library service in Renton and handing over the responsibility to KCLS.

Before the election, the City of Renton prepared documents to be mailed to all its utility customers and to be handed out at the libraries. We have taken issue with these materials: in the tone and tenor of their narrative, their careless disregard for the facts, and lack of balancing information for both sides. We feel that cost information about the irrelevant 2008 Renton Library Master Plan was included to disguise the new and additional \$4.97 million in new KCLS taxes, or alternatively if the Renton Master Plan was to be carried out, that there was a complete lack of balance in describing the two systems. The inconsistent comparison of features of KCLS and the current Renton library, then switching to the comparison of the cost between KCLS and the Master Plan, leaves the reader the impression that Renton is both lacking in features and ridiculously expensive.

Recently we have asked the Public Disclosure Commission to reconsider if the Library FAQ/Flyer published by the City of Renton is considered campaign literature. If the PDC and other government agencies decline to investigate, we intend to ask the questions ourselves. We had held off in the hopes that a decisive election result would have materialized and make our questions irrelevant. Unfortunately this is not the case, as this close election only makes the question more relevant.

Before publishing the disputed literature last year, the City asked the PDC to issue a determination. Where we feel where the process fell down was that the PDC didn't have enough information and facts in front of them to be able to make determination with certainty. The PDC suggested minor corrections, and gave a qualified approval of the city's documents. The city then continued to publish the documents. The City is to be commended on going the extra mile in this process.

Unfortunately, we don't feel that the standard of a "fair and objective" document has been met by the City's literature. Given the influence government agencies could have with such documents, the standard is set very high for good reasons.

We are pursuing this because we have two questions we would like to be answered: "Were Renton citizens influenced to vote in one particular way by their government by documents that may not have been factual and objective", and "If there was influence, did that influence sway the election results."

Depending on the answer to the first question, we may or may not ask the second question. We anticipate that getting the answer to the first question will be straightforward and easy. The second question would be harder.

We're reluctant to go this route out of respect for the city and the people who run it, but at the same time this is the only appropriate course of action to defend a fair election process. Running around getting angry does neither us or the city any good, so instead we intend to politely ask a neutral third party to judge the merits of our respective arguments. As otherwise very happy citizens of this city, we will endeavor to keep any disruption to a minimum. The sooner we can resolve this issue, the sooner we can move forward and onward.

We would be disingenuous to pretend that our motivation was entirely based on protecting the electoral process. Indeed, we halted our challenges to the documents once we had felt that the election would be won by our side in order to spare ourselves and the city we love and it's governance any more hassle. While our motivation may be partially driven because of our loss in this election, we hope that our actions won't be out of line. If you find us lacking, please tell us.

We are very much encouraged by the thoughtfulness and graciousness that the city has shown us when we asked that they protect the some of the more treasured and historic books in the Library from an agency that may not hold them in the same esteem. We also would like to thank the city for always being courteous and attentive to our concerns, even though they don't agree with us. We have never felt that the city wasn't listening to us, only that we have a difference in opinion.

If you as a citizen would like to help us get these answers, if you could please contact us via email at [allaboutrenton@live.com](mailto:allaboutrenton@live.com) . You can follow our progress at <http://SaveRentonLibrary.com> . We'll be open and candid about the entire process. If you find any fault with our logic or reasoning, please tell us. After this process, regardless of the outcome, we hope that our city is strengthened.

- Your fellow citizens of the best little city in the world