
# Campaign Finance Folly Foiled

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The Institute for Free Speech and its clients, Connecticut State Senator Rob Sampson and former Connecticut State Senator Joe Markley, have won a long-awaited judicial victory.

The Connecticut Supreme Court affirmed that it was okay for the senators to criticize the state's governor at the time, Dannel Malloy, in a campaign mailer. The State Election Enforcement Commission had contended otherwise.

In 2014, Markley and Sampson had collaborated on a mailer to defend their anti-big-spending, anti-big-taxing views against those of the governor. According to the Commission, the mailer thereby violated the state's campaign finance law. The reason: it benefited the governor's political opponent.

That opponent supposedly should have paid a third of the cost of the mailer.

By the agency's anti-speech reasoning, any statements in any campaign mailer that might somehow benefit some political candidate in the state—even a citation of the Declaration of Independence or a logic- (as opposed to fact-) check—would violate campaign finance law.

Certainly, were the principles of logic widely disseminated in the state, this would pose a grave danger to a huge majority of candidates.

The SEEC fined Sampson and Markley.

Now the state supreme court has ruled that doing so violated the First Amendment; "candidates must be able to communicate where they stand on issues in relation to other candidates and public officials…."

Good. But couldn't the judgment have come quicker? The same court issued an interim ruling back in 2021. The justices could have clobbered the SEEC's lunatic presumption back then.

Freedom of speech delayed is freedom of speech denied.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.