

February 20, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer,

We, the undersigned organizations, representing millions of American citizens nationwide, urge you to reject the so-called “For the People Act,” H.R. 1, which would have a chilling effect on free speech in America and federalize all U.S. elections.

The First Amendment is the hallmark of our republic. The unfettered right of the people to freely criticize their elected representatives is what ensures that U.S. policymaking remains accountable to the American people. Any bill that claims to be “for the people” must recognize this basic American truth.

H.R. 1 would expose the identities of countless Americans who contribute to nonprofit organizations. This opens them up to widespread political intimidation and harassment. Brave American patriots set the foundation for our nation writing under the anonymous pen names of Publius and Brutus. They understood the value of anonymity. Members of Congress should not break with this tradition by passing a bill that would have a chilling effect on civic engagement and free speech.

Another provision of the bill would force sponsors of online political content to file duplicative, burdensome reports with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). It would further require impractical and inflexible disclaimers on many online ads while also likely regulating organizations’ communications on social media and their own websites. Under such a framework, the only people who could afford to speak would be those with extensive resources and a formidable legal team. This is effectively a free speech deterrent and has no place in our democracy.

The right to vote goes hand in hand with the First Amendment. **H.R. 1 would further undermine the Constitution by broadly defining political “coordination.”** This would effectively ban any and all nonprofits from contacting a member of Congress or their staff about any policy issue. This is a blatant assault on the ability of the people to petition their government.

Unfortunately, H.R. 1 also seeks to decrease the number of commissioners on the FEC from six to five. This will end the Commission’s long history of being a bipartisan body. As a partisan body, it

could be used by the party in power to weaponize election laws against political opponents. Such an outcome would decrease public confidence in our elections. This must never be allowed to happen.

This is not the only assault on our election process. **H.R. 1 would essentially nationalize elections and disregard the proper role of states and localities in determining best election practices.** Not every precinct is created equal, and each has different needs to ensure it runs smoothly on election day. A one-size-fits-all fiat from the federal level would ensure chaos on Election Day and prevent many voters from having their voices heard.

H.R. 1 includes a provision that would provide candidates with a 6-to-1 taxpayer-funded subsidy for small-dollar campaign contributions. **This means that taxpayers – Republicans and Democrats alike – will be forced to subsidize political campaign literature and ads with which they disagree.** This could mean Democrats funding pro-Second Amendment campaign ads through their tax dollars or Republicans paying for pro-abortion ads.

There is also a provision in H.R. 1 that would allow federal bureaucrats to monitor polling places and receive payment for doing so. Federal employees, who inherently have a stake in the outcomes of elections, have no business monitoring polling places in such close proximity to thousands of voters. This is a thinly veiled form of voter intimidation.

Our nation is only a few years removed from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) targeting scores of Americans for their political beliefs. H.R. 1 lifts the policy rider that banned the IRS from codifying such targeting practices into law. The lesson from that scandal was to stop political targeting, not to encourage it.

Revealing the identities of donors and increasing the federal role in our election process are also not lessons to be learned from that scandal. As lawmakers who have taken an oath to preserve and protect the Constitution, we urge you to promote legislation that champions free speech, not legislation that severely limits it. **This is why we, on behalf of the activists and voters we represent, ask you to oppose H.R. 1.**

Sincerely,

Adam Brandon
President
FreedomWorks

Pete Sepp
President
National Taxpayers Union

David McIntosh
President
Club for Growth

Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

Tim Chapman
Executive Director
Heritage Action

Jonathan Bydlak
President
Coalition to Reduce Spending

Nathan Nascimento
Executive Vice President
Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce

Daniel Garza
President
The LIBRE Initiative

Tom Schatz
President
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Patrick Purtill
Director of Legislative Affairs
Faith and Freedom Coalition

Jeff Mazzella
President
Center for Individual Freedom

Jenny Beth Martin
Honorary Chairman
Tea Party Patriots Action

Phil Kerpen
President
American Commitment

Seton Motley
President
Less Government

James L. Martin
Founder/Chairman
60 Plus Association

Mario H. Lopez
President
Hispanic Leadership Fund

Ryan Ellis
President
Center for a Free Economy

Brent Gardner
Chief Government Affairs Officer
Americans for Prosperity

Dan Caldwell
Executive Director
Concerned Veterans for America

Lisa B. Nelson
CEO
ALEC Action

David Bozell
President
ForAmerica

Matt Kibbe
President
Free the People

Bob Barr
Chairman
Liberty Guard

David Williams
President
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Andrew Langer
President
Institute for Liberty

Saul Anuzis
President
60 Plus Association

Norm Singleton
President
Campaign for Liberty

Heather Lauer
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People United for Privacy

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James Bopp, Jr.
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Matt Kandrach
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Judson Phillips
President
Tea Party Nation

Tom McCabe
CEO
Freedom Foundation

Dudley Brown
President
National Association for Gun Rights

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