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Federal Elections Committee

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FEDERAL ELECTION
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF GENERAL
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Dear FEC:

Please don't adopt your draft regulations on political committees.

I agree that there may be a need for more regulation of 527 committees, but this should be done by Congress, after a broad public debate, not rushed through by an administrative agency. And I am especially disturbed that the rules you have proposed would apply not only to 527s, but also to labor unions and 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) groups.

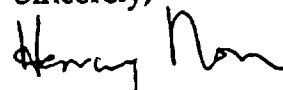
Under the proposed rules, as I understand them, the definition of "political committee" would be expanded to encompass any group that spends even modest amounts of money on voter registration or that mention candidates in the course of the public education and advocacy they are set up to do. Given the reporting requirements and funding restrictions the law applies to political committees, few of these non-profits could survive if classified as such.

The inevitable result, therefore, is that most of them would have to abandon any voter-registration work and drastically limit what they can say in their advocacy and education. That's precisely the wrong direction to go in - with our horrendously low voter-participation rates and widespread ignorance and apathy about the issues we face, we should be encouraging, not discouraging, voter registration and public debate.

Non-profit, issue-oriented organizations are a key part of the political life of our nation. By drastically curtailing their work, your proposals would significantly impoverish our democracy.

At the very least, such far-reaching changes should be the focus of a major national debate and decided by elected representatives, not an appointed commission. If you think they're necessary, ask Congress to take up the question.

Sincerely,


Henry Norr