



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

April 11, 2016

To: Members of the Missouri House

From: Americans for Tax Reform

Re: HB 2203

Dear Members of the Missouri Legislature,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform and our supporters across Missouri, I write today to urge you to reject HB 2203. As amended by Sen. Kurt Schaefer, this legislation will have a chilling effect on free speech by restricting the ability of charitable organizations, social welfare organizations, and individuals to engage in advocacy issues within and outside of the Show-Me State.

Under Sen. Schaefer's bill, all 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) groups that are run by a candidate, a candidate's spouse, or those who are employed by or have a contract with the candidate must disclose their donors even if they do not operate within the state. Campaign finance "reformers," like Sen. Schaefer, hide behind the notion that mandatory disclosure of donors to political causes is vital to transparency in the election process. While they may value transparency, they are undermining political plurality.

These same laws are used to intimidate and harass individuals for their political views. As a result, the amount of people choosing to exercise their rights in the name of political speech are bound to diminish, as businesspeople will have to choose between their wellbeing and their right to express themselves.

Sen. Schaefer's effort to remove existing free speech protections by requiring all non-profits to disclose donors even if they do not operate within the state would erode the rights of your constituents and those that reside outside your state as well. The First Amendment is a sacred pillar of American exceptionalism that has only been curtailed in extreme circumstances. Even the United States Supreme Court has shown deference to this fundamental right. For example, in the 1958 Supreme Court case of NAACP v. Alabama the court put a stop to this type of arduous statutory restriction on free speech and free association. At the time, the Court's decision to provide for "immunity from state scrutiny" for organizations like the NAACP safeguarded an important protection on First Amendment rights by protecting members of organizations from intimidation and harassment. In the 2010 case, Citizens United v. FEC, the Supreme Court further restored free-speech rights for non-profit organizations as well.

If enacted, this legislation will fly in the face of the Supreme Court precedent and erode centuries old constitutional rights. I urge you to stand up for the rights of your constituents and all Americans by voting no on this onerous legislation.

Americans for Tax Reform will be educating your constituents as to how you vote on these important matters. If you have any questions or if ATR can be of assistance, don't

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hesitate to contact me or Miriam Roff, state affairs coordinator, at the office, 202-785-0266.

Onward,



Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform