



March 5, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of March for Life Action and the millions of pro-life Americans who march to end abortion, I am writing to voice our opposition to H.R. 1, the misnomered “For the People Act of 2019.” Many aspects of the bill seek to put an undue burden on organizations and individuals who speak out for the unborn – discouraging these people from participating in the political process. When H.R. 1 reaches the House floor March for Life Action will score a “yes” vote negatively in our scorecard for the First Session of the 116th Congress.

H.R. 1 would regulate a new category of speech – communications that “promote,” “attack,” “support,” or “oppose” (“PASO”) federal candidates and elected officials. Under this broad and vague standard, groups that merely speak about federal legislation or policy issues could be forced to file FEC reports that they did not have to file before. This is conflicting to Supreme Court precedent limiting the regulation of speech to communications that could have no reasonable meaning other than to advocate the election or defeat of a candidate.

The main beneficiaries of H.R. 1 would be incumbent politicians and campaign finance attorneys while those who would suffer most would be grassroots activists. The legislation would greatly increase the already onerous legal and administrative compliance costs, liability risk, and costs to donor and associational privacy for public groups that help inform citizens speak about policy issues and politicians. Instead of being able to inform the public organizations will have to divert resources away from their advocacy activities to pay for compliance staff and lawyers. Some groups will not be able to afford these costs or will violate the law unwittingly. Less speech by private citizens and organizations means politicians will be able to act with less accountability to public opinion and criticism.

When our great nation's founders articulated the rights of Americans, they not only included the right to life but also the right to free speech. As those who speak up for the unborn, we uniquely combine those two rights. H.R. 1 would take away one of those rights, the freedom of speech, making it almost impossible for us to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. For these reasons, March for Life Action will score against the legislation our annual scorecard for the First Session of the 116th Congress.

Sincerely,

Thomas McClusky
President, March for Life ActionS