

September 9, 2014

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

We write to express our strong opposition to S.J. Res. 19, which would eliminate many of the free speech protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights.

First, the resolution goes against the First Amendment's bedrock principle that the government should not restrict expression based on its message, ideas, or content. By permitting speech regulation that distinguishes between individuals and organizations, the resolution would allow the government to discriminate against speech based on the speaker's viewpoint – an area of government speech regulation that is plainly forbidden by the First Amendment. S.J. Res. 19 would eliminate this First Amendment protection and permit the government to target certain organizations based solely on their political viewpoint.

Second, S.J. Res. 19 would dramatically increase the scope of federal and state speech regulation. Under S.J. Res. 19, the federal government would have the authority to prohibit or otherwise limit speech relating to state elections. Likewise, the resolution would allow states to prohibit or limit speech relating to federal elections. This cross-regulation would expand the number of possible speech regulators, significantly increasing the likelihood that traditional First Amendment protections would be restricted. The resolution also would allow the federal government to abrogate state election regulation – an area historically reserved to state authority. Under S.J. Res. 19, even if a state wanted to preserve First Amendment protections for its citizens, the federal government could intercede and restrict state election-related speech.

Third, S.J. Res. 19 would significantly curtail the constitutionally protected right of freedom of association. It has long been understood that the First Amendment goes beyond political speech and expression to also protect the freedom to associate with others to advance common beliefs and ideas. The constitutional right of association recognizes that group association enhances effective advocacy, particularly on controversial topics. S.J. Res. 19 would allow Congress, or a state, to override this constitutional principle and prohibit individuals from associating together to promote their beliefs in the political sphere.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose S.J. Res. 19.

Sincerely,

60 Plus Association  
Aeronautical Repair Station Association  
Aerospace Industries Association  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
Air Conditioning Contractors of America  
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)  
American Association of Exporters and Importers

American Bakers Association  
American Composites Manufacturers Association  
American Insurance Association  
American Lighting Association  
American Moving & Storage Association  
American Rental Association  
American Supply Association  
American Trucking Associations  
Arizona Business Coalition  
Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Arizona Manufacturers Council  
Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce /Associated Industries of AR  
Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce – OH  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Delaware Chapter  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Empire State Chapter  
Associated Builders and Contractors of Michigan  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Rhode Island Chapter  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Rocky Mountain Chapter  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Western Washington Chapter  
Associated Equipment Distributors  
Associated General Contractors of America  
Associated Oregon Industries  
Associated Wire Rope Fabricators  
Association for Corporate Growth  
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce – MN  
Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association  
Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce – WI  
Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce – ND  
Buffalo Niagara Partnership – NY  
Business Council of Alabama  
Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce – NC  
California Chamber of Commerce  
Catawba County Chamber of Commerce – NC  
Center for Individual Freedom  
Central Florida Chapter Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.  
Chamber Southwest Louisiana  
ChamberWest Regional Chamber of Commerce (representing West Valley City, Taylorsville and  
Kearns) – UT  
Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry – PA  
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce – IL  
Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry  
Commerce Lexington, Inc. (Greater Central Kentucky Chamber of Commerce)  
Construction Industry Round Table  
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce  
East Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (representing Millcreek) – UT

Electronic Retailing Association  
Electronic Security Association (ESA)  
Equipment Marketing & Distribution Association (EMDA)  
Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce – VA  
Family Research Council  
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce – ND  
Florida Chamber of Commerce  
Fresno Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Fullerton Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Galion-Crestline Area Chamber of Commerce – OH  
Georgia Mining Association  
Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Graham Texas Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce – FL  
Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce – SC  
Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce – TX  
Greater Louisville Inc. – the Metro Chamber of Commerce – KY  
Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce – AZ  
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce – PA  
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce – NC  
Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce – VA  
Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce – VA  
Heating, Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International (HARDI)  
Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce – SC  
Illinois Chamber of Commerce  
Indiana Chamber of Commerce  
Industrial Supply Association  
International Foodservice Distributors Association  
International Franchise Association  
Johnson City / Jonesborough / Washington County Chamber of Commerce – TN  
Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry – IL  
Kauai Chamber of Commerce – HI  
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce  
Kingsport Chamber of Commerce – TN  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Lubbock Chamber of Commerce – TX  
Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors (MAPPS)  
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce – NY  
Maryland Chamber of Commerce  
Metals Service Center Institute  
Michigan Chamber of Commerce  
Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce – AL  
Montana Chamber of Commerce

NAHAD – The Association for Hose & Accessories Distribution  
Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce – IL  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
National Black Chamber of Commerce  
National Council of Chain Restaurants  
National Federation of Independent Business  
National Independent Automobile Dealers Association  
National Marine Distributors Association  
National Mining Association  
National Restaurant Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Roofing Contractors Association  
National Society of Professional Surveyors  
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association  
National Taxpayers Union  
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
New Jersey Motor Truck Association  
New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce  
Newberry County Development Board / Chamber of Commerce – SC  
North American Equipment Dealers Association  
North Carolina Chamber  
North Country Chamber of Commerce – NY  
Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce  
Ohio Chamber of Commerce  
Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce – FL  
Outdoor Power Equipment and Engine Service Association  
Pacific-West Fastener Association  
Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Pelican Chapter Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.  
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry  
Prince William Chamber of Commerce – VA  
Retail Grocers Association of Greater Kansas City  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Coalition  
Richland Area Chamber of Commerce – OH  
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce – NY  
Salt Lake Chamber – UT  
Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce and Convention-Visitors Bureau – CA  
Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce – PA  
Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce – CA  
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council  
South Dakota Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
South Shore Chamber of Commerce – MA  
Southwest Cable Communications Association

Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce – AZ  
SouthWestern Equipment Dealers Association  
St. TammanyWest Chamber of Commerce – LA  
Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Textile Care Allied Trades Association  
The Business Council of New York State  
The Capitol Group  
The Chamber of Reno, Sparks, and Northern Nevada  
The Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce – LA  
The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce – NE  
The Kansas Chamber  
The Kansas Food Dealers Association  
The Longview TX Chamber of Commerce  
The National Association of Chemical Distributors  
The Ohio Society of CPAs  
The Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber – MI  
The State Chamber of Oklahoma  
The West Virginia Chamber  
Tire Industry Association  
Tucson Metro Chamber – AZ  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Virginia Chamber of Commerce  
White Pine Chamber of Commerce-Ely, Nevada – NV  
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce – MN  
Wisconsin Grocers Association  
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce  
Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association