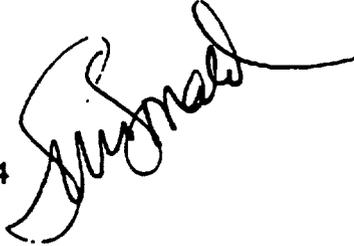


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Re: Comments on proposed rulemaking regarding political committee status

This proposed rule strikes me first and foremost as an attempt to regulate free speech. It sounds to me as if an organization even expresses an opinion about an office holder's policies or record, they can be deemed a federally regulated political committee and be subject to fund raising restrictions. This could be crippling for some organizations.

It also appears that there is an attempt to penalize groups by going back four years (prior to when McCain-Feingold existed) to see if a non-profit group qualifies as a federally regulated political committee. If so, they would have to repay their "old" debts. Essentially, any current fund raising activities would go to repay old debts, which would stop any current work. This would also act as a method for keeping the non-profit quiet about any current office holder.

The proposed rule is aimed at silencing or severely restricting political debate and protecting office holders from criticism for their policy positions. It restricts people's access to information – pro and con – about an office holder, outside of that officially sanctioned by the office holder's party or campaign committee. If the non-profits are saddled with the fund-raising restrictions, they may not be able to provide what I consider to be a valuable service of providing information for the consideration of the public. The idea of this country in general is to have an informed group of voters. This proposed rule restricts access to information. It does not seem to me that campaign finance reform is intended to restrict information or political debate.

FEC should not change this policy in the middle of an election year. It is not fair to non-profits. It goes well beyond what Congress and the Supreme Court established. It's not fair to the people who donated to these non-profits. It also strikes me that to do this in an election year will be perceived as trying to silence debate and criticism that may be surrounding certain Federal office holders' policies.

The current McCain-Feingold finance reform law should be given a chance to work.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule.