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COMMISSION  
SECRETARIAT

February 4, 2004  
2610 NE 195<sup>th</sup>, Apt. B-8  
Shoreline, WA 98155

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Mary W. Dove  
Commission Secretary  
Federal Election Commission  
999 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20463

Re: Draft Advisory Opinion 2003-37

Dear Commission Secretary Dove:

I am writing to express my serious concern about the General Counsel's draft of Advisory Opinion 2003-37. I feel that it adversely effects freedom of speech in our country by severely curtailing the educational, advocacy and voter participation activities of nonfederal political organizations and other nonprofit corporations.

Nonfederal political organizations and other nonprofit corporations contribute to the wellness of our Democracy in the following ways:

- Educating the public and advocating positions on legislative and policy issues
- Letting members of the public, like myself, know about the positions taken by officeholders with respect to these issues
- Helping citizens participate in the democratic process
  - Helping us to know the stance of officeholders on particular issues
  - Helping us to know when to call officeholders in order to express opinions on issues of importance to us
  - Helping us to decide how to vote during elections.

I agree with the letter that was filed today and signed by 324 environmental, civil rights, civil liberties, women's rights, public health, social welfare, senior, religious, and social justice organizations. As the letter states: "Making it unlawful to criticize the policies and actions of a sitting President or Members of Congress except under the auspices of a registered political committee is one of the most fundamental attacks on the freedom of speech and freedom of association of American citizens ever contemplated by a governmental agency."

This is not only an issue for these organizations, but for all citizens, who, like myself, believe that freedom of speech—including freedom to criticize—is fundamental to the healthy functioning of Democracy in the United States. If dissent is not allowed to exist, if advocacy is erased, Democracy will no longer exist.

I respectfully urge the Commission not to issue the draft opinion in its present form.

Sincerely,

  
Blythe Horman