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AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY
TEXAS

February 13, 2007

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

On behalf of millions of grassroots Americans represented by the organizations listed below, we write to express our stark opposition to any legislation that further curtails free political speech. Specifically, in a January 26, 2007 article published in The Politico, a top aide in your office announced that you will introduce legislation in the 110th Congress "to further clamp down on independent '527' groups."

The irony, of course, lies in the fact that the '527' organizations you now seek to silence are a direct consequence of McCain/Feingold's abridgments of free political speech.

Senator McCain, the Founding Fathers couldn't have been more clear in drafting the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution when they stated unequivocally, "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech... or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of

grievances.” We maintain that these words mean exactly what they say, and stand at the core of our rights as American citizens.

Furthermore, we find it puzzling that just as you seek to stifle even more political speech via legislation aimed at ‘527’ organizations, you refuse to answer direct questions about whether you’ll limit your own ability to speak by campaigning for President within the limitations of the presidential public financing system. Indeed, the most direct answer you have given to date was during a November 19, 2006 interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC’s This Week, during which you responded to the question by stating, “I don’t think – it depends, one, on what other candidates do...”

To be clear, as a matter of principle we consider it fundamentally improper for taxpayer dollars – even if voluntary – to be used to subsidize political campaigns. As you seek, however, to further suppress the voices of the American people at times when it’s most important for them to speak – during elections – we remain curious as to why you haven’t committed to applying similar speech limitations to your own campaign.

We hold the 2002 McCain-Feingold legislation to be one of the greatest legislative assaults on the First Amendment ever passed by Congress. Just as we opposed that legislation, so too do we oppose any further restrictions on political speech. Moreover, we find it troubling that you would introduce and advocate new speech-stifling legislation at a time when it appears that your presidential campaign is willing to forego similar limitations in favor of your political aspirations.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you neither introduce nor support any further legislation designed to muzzle political speech.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey Mazzella, President, Center for Individual Freedom
David Keene, Chairman, American Conservative Union
James Bopp, Jr., General Counsel, James Madison Center for Free Speech
David N. Bossie, President, Citizens United
Richard Viguerie, Conservative HQ
David Ridenour, Vice President, The National Center for Public Policy Research
George Landrith, President, Frontiers for Freedom
Chuck Muth, President, Citizen Outreach Project
Doug Bandow, Vice President for Policy, Citizen Outreach Project
Jason Wright, Institute for Liberty
Mark Fitzgibbons, GrassrootsFreedom.com
Kay R. Daly, President, Coalition for a Fair Judiciary
Michael D. Ostrolenk, Co-Founder/National Director, Liberty Coalition
Dr. William Greene, President, RightMarch.com
Steve Milloy, Publisher, JunkScience.com
Peggy M. Venable, Director, Americans for Prosperity – Texas
Christine Carmouche, GrassTopsUSA
David Strom, President, Taxpayers League of Minnesota
Richard O. Rowland, President, Grassroot Institute of Hawaii