

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Protect Bloggers and Political Speech on the Web
Support the Internet Free Speech Protection Act

March 8, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Today, Representative Charles Bass and I are introducing the Internet Free Speech Protection Act of 2006. This bill promotes freedom of speech over the Internet by protecting bloggers from the disclosure and reporting requirements of campaign finance laws.

Our bill is based on a proposal drafted by the Center for Democracy and Technology (www.cdt.org), a non-profit, public policy organization "dedicated to promoting the democratic potential of today's open, decentralized global Internet" that "champions the rights of individuals to communicate, publish and obtain an unprecedented array of information on the Internet."

Our bill protects the ability of bloggers and individuals to publish and express political opinion over the Internet without the fear that they will be forced to file with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) or be subject to lawsuits, without opening any soft money loopholes in federal campaign law. Specifically, the bill:

- Allows an individual to expressly advocate for a candidate on his/her website or to buy ads on the Internet to expressly advocate for a candidate without having to file FEC reports, and without having to display the "paid for" disclaimer, as long as the amount expended is under \$5,000. The current threshold for independent expenditure reporting is \$250;
- Allows an individual to buy political ads on another person's website without such activity being subject to the coordination rules in the campaign finance laws, as long as the amount expended is under \$5,000;
- Allows a group of individuals to operate a website designed to influence federal elections without triggering "political committee" status, as long as they spend less than \$10,000. The current threshold is \$1,000;
- Adds Internet "new media" to the current media exemption from campaign finance laws; and
- Requires the FEC to post a single, plain language policy guideline so that bloggers have a clear understanding of the rules.

For more information on the Internet Free Speech Protection Act, please contact Todd Stein with Rep. Allen (x5-6116) or Jennifer Warren with Rep. Bass (x5-5206).



Tom Allen
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Charles Bass
Member of Congress