

Sent via email on 10/25 to:

Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-IL), Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Rep. Roy Blount (R-MO), House Majority Leader (Designated)  
Rep. Michael Oxley (R-OH), Chair, Financial Services Committee  
Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Minority Leader  
Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD), House Democratic Whip  
Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)

The Hon. \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Rep. \_\_\_\_\_:

We write to oppose a provision in the Housing Finance Reform Act (H.R. 1461) that would prevent nonprofit organizations from engaging in advocacy and nonpartisan voter participation activities. In effect, it would restrict the ability of many low-income American citizens to engage in our democratic process. The bill likely will be voted on this week. We strongly urge you to seek the removal of the provision before the bill is acted on.

Current law already restricts federal grantees from using federal funds to lobby or engage in partisan electioneering. The anti-advocacy provision in H.R. 1461 adds unfair and inappropriate restrictions on organizations that engage in lobbying or nonpartisan voter participation activities, making them ineligible to receive support under a new Affordable Housing Fund (AHF).

Even more egregious, the anti-advocacy provision in H.R. 1461 would prohibit a nonprofit organization from even affiliating with any organization that engages in any lobbying or voter participation activities. Affiliation would disqualify the nonprofit from applying for Affordable Housing Fund grants. Notably, for-profit companies are exempt from these restrictions.

As leaders of an organization dedicated to promoting grassroots advocacy and civic participation, we are especially dismayed by the provision's potential to reduce involvement in the democratic process, especially within low-income communities.

The advocacy restrictions in H.R. 1461 have seriously adverse implications for the entire nonprofit sector. Nonpartisan get-out-the-vote and related activities are a great American tradition and, in fact, are encouraged by Congress through such laws as the Help America Vote Act. Therefore, we urge you to take the necessary steps to strike the anti-advocacy provision in H.R. 1461.

Sincerely,

Jerry Hauser, President and CEO

David Cohen, Co-Chair, Board of Directors