



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

STATE & LOCAL AFFAIRS DIVISION  
BRIAN JUDY, MONTANA STATE LIAISON

TO: Members of the House of Representatives  
FROM: Brian Judy, NRA-ILA Montana State Liaison  
DATE: March 20, 2015  
RE: Senate Bill 289 (Campaign finance revision)

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On behalf of the tens of thousands of NRA members in Montana, I urge your **opposition to Senate Bill 289**, legislation that would revise the campaign finance laws in Montana and impose onerous disclosure requirements on non-profits and other issue advocacy groups. SB 289 is overreaching and harmful legislation that would have a chilling effect on freedoms of speech and association. The bill seeks to suppress political speech --including nonpartisan speech-- by organizations such as the NRA.

If enacted, SB 289 could require NRA to disclose personal donor information. The danger of threats and intimidation based on political views is a serious issue. Forcing the disclosure of personal information of those who contribute to political interest groups can result in the harassment of individuals by their political opponents. The NRA strongly opposes this attempt to inhibit fundamental First Amendment rights by requiring disclosure of the names, employers, addresses, and contribution amounts of those who affiliate with political interest groups.

Senate Bill 289 creates a high level of uncertainty for organizations that participate in the political process and communicate information relating to candidates, ballot issues and elections to individuals in Montana. Of particular concern is the significant amount of discretion and decision-making that is delegated to the unelected Commissioner of Political Practices, including determinations of who would actually be affected under this bill, leaving the full extent of the bill's reach unclear.

Senate Bill 289 would accomplish little more than to violate freedom of speech and association, jeopardize open and meaningful discussions by imposing subjective restraints, and subject politically active Montanans to harassment and political bullying through exposure of their personal affairs. No organization or its members should have to submit to vague, broad government regulation to participate in or facilitate a meaningful discussion on the salient issues or policies of the day.

Even though Senate Bill 289 does not mention the word "firearm" once in the voluminous twenty-seven pages of proposed law, it may actually be the most important firearms rights bill of the 2015 legislative session. **The NRA takes this threat to the political freedom of Montanans very seriously and urges your vote against Senate Bill 289.**