

## **Interpretation of the Proposed Declaratory Ruling 2018-01 And its Impact on Members of Orange Indivisible**

Thank you for the opportunity to file comments regarding this Proposal.

### ***Background - Current Activities and Purpose of the Group:***

The group meets monthly and communicates regularly thru email and social media. We discuss and share legislative issues which affect our lives, like healthcare, the environment, gun safety, taxes, etc.

The group was formed to influence elected officials to support legislation important to individuals in the group. These individuals volunteer to undertake civic actions. Individually, these include contacting members of Congress and their CT State representatives through emails, mail and the telephone, to determine their positions and discuss issues. We also submit letters to newspapers, attend town halls, circulate petitions via email, and attend appropriate rallies found through social and main stream media, as well as communicated through email.

### ***Money***

There are no dues, fundraising or any activities of monetary value. Hence, there is no "treasury". Thus, proposed rules regarding independent expenditures or contributions would appear to have no application to the group, and the group would probably not even be considered an incidental spender.

### ***Membership***

The association of these individuals appears not to meet the definition of "members", as there are:

- no dues and no financial or organizational attachments;
- no formal structure or bylaws;
- no elections or voting by/for members;
- no applications or requirements for membership;
- no filings as a not-for-profit corporation or organization

Consequently, we believe that we would not be viewed as a "membership organization" but rather viewed as a "loosely associated group of individuals", more like a book club.

### ***Communications***

Communications occur primarily through email, texting and social media. Since there are no expenditures or contributions, we assume we are free to communicate with each other using these methods, as well as with friends and acquaintances we have met from similar, like-minded organizations. Communications to other friends and acquaintances would also most likely be made via email, text messaging or social media, but the distribution of such messaging could be broadcast to many others without our control. We also believe the distribution of messages cannot be controlled by the sender.

### ***Planned Election Activities***

Individuals plan to volunteer to support candidates who reflect their thinking on issues important to them. Awareness of these candidates could occur through discussions at a monthly meeting, one's own research, communications among like-minded individuals, candidate debates or forums, etc,

Planned activities for these candidates would focus on canvassing and phone banking. These volunteers would use their own phones, computers, automobiles, and homes. Here, it seems evident that there are no expenditures associated with these activities and therefore, there are no restrictions.

Volunteers might use a candidate's headquarters to meet, phone bank (with their own phones), and/or receive candidate literature for distribution during canvassing. None of these activities would require an expenditure by the volunteers from the group, other than those that are assumed to be classified as de minimis – (use of one's phone, computer, auto, internet connection for email and social media).

Volunteers intend to contact the candidate/campaign staff to obtain target voter lists. These would be used to contact a candidate's constituents by canvassing or phoning. There would be no expenditure made by the volunteer, nor any discussion or involvement in a campaign's strategy. Thus, we believe that simply contacting a campaign for this information, then canvassing and phone banking on behalf of the candidate, would not be considered coordination. This is further true if there is no plan or act to make any expenditures after the volunteers completed their canvassing and phone banking activities.

Finally, given the nature of this group's characteristics, its planned activities, and based upon the definitions in the Proposal, we don't believe it is necessary to register a committee.

We are not attorneys nor have the resources to engage attorneys to clarify the language in this Proposal. We therefore would appreciate clarification in terms we might better understand.

We respectfully request confirmation of our interpretation of this Proposal, or further clarification so that we may be guided accordingly.

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