

Wisconsin Family Action: Files lawsuit to protect free speech rights and donor privacy

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MADISON - Yesterday, through attorneys with the Institute for Free Speech and Michael D. Dean, LLC, Wisconsin Family Action (WFA) filed a federal [lawsuit](#) aimed at stopping a massive expansion of the Federal Election Commission's (FEC) donor disclosure mandates for nonprofit groups that advocate for the election or defeat of federal candidates.

WFA filed the lawsuit to protect its right to speak independently to the public about various federal candidates in future elections. In recent years, the FEC has suggested that federal law required a nonprofit who advocates for the election or defeat of a federal candidate and spends \$250 or more to communicate their message, to publicly disclose the name and addresses of every person who gives the nonprofit as little as \$200 in a calendar year.

“Wisconsin citizens who support our work should never have to worry that their personal information will be shared with the FEC, and thus be made publicly available. We know from personal experience that those who oppose our mission and our values are not above harassment and threats. This lawsuit is a preemptive measure to ensure our freedom of speech is protected and that our friends who financially support this organization are not subjected to disclosure or any acts of retaliation,” commented Julaine Appling, president of WFA.

“If the FEC’s interpretation of the law is correct, it’s unconstitutional. Americans have a right to support nonprofits without being reported to the Federal Election

Commission or having their personal information plastered all over the internet. The First Amendment doesn't allow the government to make such sweeping demands for sensitive information about our support for nonprofit causes," said Don Daugherty, Senior Attorney at the Institute for Free Speech.

The case is *Wisconsin Family Action v. Federal Election Commission* in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Green Bay Division. The complaint is available [HERE](#). The press release for Institute for Free Speech is available [HERE](#).