



Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of A.B. 197, for the record.

On Behalf of Americans for Prosperity – Nevada and thousands of our activists, we urge you to support this bill.

At Americans for Prosperity, we are committed to bringing people together to implement good public policy. Citizens joining together to amplify their voices is an American tradition that predates the founding, and it is essential to continued progress toward the American ideal. And when citizens join together to speak with one voice, the First Amendment of the constitution protects their right to do so – agents of the government should never attempt to chill or silence that speech.

Unfortunately, in today's hyper-partisan political climate, that freedom is at risk.

Today, every charitable donor, every volunteer to a cause, and every member of an advocacy group faces potential reprisals for their civic activity if their private information is leaked. When this information is publicly exposed, supporters to unpopular causes face threats of harassment or even violence. Selectively publicized information can be weaponized leading to boycotts, firings and other unwarranted economic or social harms. And on the internet, that information can be spread almost instantaneously to every political opponent, to every nosy neighbor, and every potential bad actor. Once this information is out there, the privacy is lost forever.

This bill is very a simple step toward alleviating some of those harms. It provides basic, uncontroversial protections for supporters, members and volunteers to nonprofits against the potential illegal disclosure of their private information. It prohibits government from collecting this information unless the government needs it. And it mandates that if the government does collect this private information, it cannot leak that information.

Let me be clear about what this bill does and does not do. It only imposes these restrictions on government actors who do not have a legitimate purpose to possess private supporter information. It enshrines into law what is already Supreme Court precedent.

It does not in any way affect the ability of the state to investigate fraud or other potential unethical or criminal activities. It does not in any way infringe on the state's legitimate campaign finance disclosures. It does not affect government transparency efforts to track and account for the state's dollars. Its sole uncontroversial purpose is to prevent the release of private information by overzealous or rogue government actors who, outside of their normal duties and motivated by their own politics, are looking to invade Americans privacy.

This is NOT a Republican or Democrat issue, it is an issue for every American. I believe everyone, regardless of the R or D after their name, can see the value of robust civic society; a vote for this bill is a vote affirming that belief in America's civic institutions.

Americans for Prosperity believes civil liberties, and the nonprofits that exercise them, serve as the foundation of our country. Freedoms of speech and the press, and freedom of conscience and the right to peaceably assemble and freely associate make it possible for everyday people to take courageous stands to drive social progress. But it should be up to each citizen, not a government bureaucrat, whether their advocacy is publicly announced from their Facebook page, or whether their support is allowed to be kept private.

This bill helps ensure the people of Nevada can fully exercise their First Amendment rights, including the right to freely associate. It is for these reasons that I ask you to vote yes in support of A.B. 197.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Najarro

State Director