



November 14, 2022

Mayor and City Council Members:

The Board of the North of Montana Association (NOMA) has voted to urge you to oppose item 16D. While historically NOMA has not chosen to endorse candidates, we support all Neighborhood Associations' right to do so. We have in the past felt it important to support or oppose ballot measures of great impact to residents, and this proposal would deny our right to do so.

The proposal is anti-democratic and antagonistic. It amounts to a gag order on the free speech of Neighborhood Associations which have long been a valuable source of information about City policy, a forum for residents to interact with City representatives, and a place to discuss politics and issues important to residents.

There are already well-established legal limits that 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations must adhere to regarding candidate and policy endorsements, which renders this proposal unnecessary and unwelcome. Threatening to take away Neighborhood Associations' modest City funding and recognition, even if groups are in compliance with current non-profit organization regulations, would unnecessarily stifle public discourse.

The NOMA Board