



# NEWS

## AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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### **THE WRONG DIRECTION – A DO-NOT-SPAM LIST WOULD CREATE MORE, NOT LESS, UNSOLICITED E-MAIL**

As Internet technology continues to develop, and more and more communication and commerce takes place electronically, businesses and individuals are finding new opportunities unimaginable a generation ago. However, with new technologies and opportunities come new problems, and one new problem created by the Internet is unsolicited commercial e-mail, or “spam.”

Internet users open their mailboxes each day to find potentially hundreds of e-mails offering them products ranging from herbal supplements to pornography from anonymous, untraceable senders. The technology industry and government officials have put forward various proposals, including one to create a national “do-not-spam” registry, modeled on the “do-not-call” registry that allows consumers a blanket opt-out from all telemarketing calls.

**Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) strongly opposes any legislative effort to create a national do-not-spam registry to address the issue of unsolicited commercial e-mail.**

Most telemarketers are law-abiding, legitimate businesses, whereas a large number of spam senders are not, using deceptive subject lines and false e-mail addresses to get around filters and existing laws. Of course, spammers would ignore a do-not-spam registry just as they ignore the laws that already exist.

The only way in which a do-not-spam list would be effective is in compiling a comprehensive national list of valid e-mail addresses – a goldmine for any spammer. This is not an issue with a “do-not-call” list because the phone book serves the same purpose. Currently, spammers purchase lists of email addresses from other spammers, but a national registry would put them all in one place to be purloined free of charge. The Federal Trade Commission has already indicated that it could not guarantee the security of such a registry, and it would only take one illegitimate spammer who acquires the list to assure that the addresses contained therein would be widely available throughout the illegitimate spam world.

A do-not-spam registry would do nothing to discourage senders from flooding our inboxes, and would increase the ability of spammers to inundate them with junk mail. Therefore ATR strongly opposes the creation of such a list.