

Verizon's blocking of NARAL's text messaging campaign violates the principles of Free Speech which are critical to our nation's democratic system. The unrestricted ability to communicate with the people and organizations of my choice is just as important in text as it is in voice.

Carriers' assurances that they won't block political speech in the future are simply not enough. The FCC must take action to ensure that this does not happen again by making it clear that the nondiscrimination rules which have long applied to phone calls are also applicable to text messages and short codes.

Don't let wireless carriers be the gatekeepers that decide who may use new, important mediums like text messaging; please keep speech free, no matter what form it comes in.

If the owners of a medium are allowed to control or censor the message, or are held responsible for message content in any way, that is like making roadbuilders and the government that owns and maintains a road responsible for the offenses of speeders and reckless drivers. It makes no sense.

Similarly, the road builders should not be allowed to decide that a particular brand of car, or a car with a particular bumper sticker, should be barred from traveling on that road.

Since corporate entities are comprised of and owned by people, and people are political by nature, corporations sometimes try to censor communications on the media they own, and this necessitates rules to stop this behavior. Such rules should not be selectively applied, but must be made the same for everyone, and should protect the principles of free speech on which our democracy rests.

If communications via text messaging or any other medium are illegal, then government has well established policies and processes to allow police to address the situation. In any other case, however, the principles of free speech and privacy of communications must be observed and supported, and rules made when necessary to ensure that corporations will do this.