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**For Immediate Release**

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**Free Speech for People and CREW  
Call for Justice Department Investigation of  
Group Promoting Big Money in Politics**

Free Speech for People and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) are calling for the Justice Department to investigate apparently illegal behavior by American Tradition Partnership (ATP), a shadowy group working to undermine our laws aimed at keeping big money out of politics.

The group, American Tradition Partnership (ATP), appears to have lied to the IRS when it applied for nonprofit, tax-exempt status. According to the New York Times: "It said it would not try to influence elections for public office, yet it has done so repeatedly." (Editorial, October 28th, 2012)

ATP was the group that sued the state of Montana about a year ago to kill the state's century-old Corrupt Practices Act, which barred corporate spending on elections there, extending the twisted logic of the infamous Citizens United case to invalidate Montana's law. The US Supreme Court sided with ATP, and refused even to hear Montana's arguments before throwing out its law.

"The U.S. Justice Department must investigate ATP," said Free Speech for People executive director John Bonifaz. "It's increasingly clear that ATP has been operating with no regard for the law, even as it exploits that law to keep its donors' identities secret and works to undermine important laws keeping money out of politics."

**Additional background:**

Recently, a news report by ProPublica found that ATP "said it would not attempt to sway elections when it asked the IRS to recognize it as a tax-exempt social welfare organization in late 2008." Yet even "before submitting the application, [ATP] and a related political committee sent out fliers weighing in on candidates for Montana state office. The mailers blitzed districts in Montana days before the Republican primary." (ProPublica: "Did the Dark Money Group that Spurred a Landmark Ruling Mislead the IRS?", by Kim Barker and Emma Schwarz, October 22nd, 2012)

Recently, Frontline and Marketplace reported on recently-discovered documents suggesting that ATP broke another serious law, by coordinating its work with various candidates' campaigns for public office. Such coordination between candidates' campaigns and tax-exempt groups like ATP is also illegal. (Frontline & Marketplace: "Big Sky, Big Money", with Kai Ryssdal, October 30th, 2012)

In addition to calling for an investigation, Free Speech for People and CREW have launched the following petition: <http://bit.ly/UgR9Ee>

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