



A joint letter from The P2P Alliance for Responsible Political Texting & Peerly Inc.
Re: iOS 26 and the Risk to Democratic Engagement

To:

Mr. Tim Powderly
Senior Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy, Americas
Apple Inc. One Apple Park Way
Cupertino, CA 95014
USA

CC:

- *Office of the CEO, Tim Cook*

Mr. Powderly

First, we acknowledge Apple's remarkable impact on global communication and commend its commitment to supporting free democratic speech. The iPhone is more than a device—it's the primary way millions of Americans engage with the world and their democracy. That's why we're raising serious concerns about the potential unintended consequences of the upcoming iOS 26 update.

If reports are correct, iOS 26 will introduce message filtering that could inadvertently divert opt-in political peer-to-peer (P2P) text messages & political short code messages—even from verified, compliant senders—to an "Unknown" inbox without alerting or displaying the message to the user.

Texting is the last direct, effective link between campaigns and voters.

Text messages mobilize voters, raise small-dollar donations, and deliver crucial election information. Millions of Americans voluntarily opt in to receive these messages, and campaigns across the spectrum have worked for years to meet high standards of compliance through registries, regulatory bodies, and strict opt-in/out protocols.

The Risk to Democracy

If these messages are silently filtered:

- Voter turnout drops — critical reminders and GOTV alerts go unread
- Fundraising plummets — campaigns lose funding lifelines
- New voices are silenced — independent and first-time candidates lose access
- Democracy suffers — when compliant political speech is treated like spam, it's not neutrality—it's interference

Treating bona fide political communications, the same as scams or unsolicited commercial spam is unjust in a free society. Political speech—especially when from verified and compliant sources—deserves different treatment than predatory or fraudulent messages. There is a fundamental difference between a campaign update and a phishing attempt, and technology must recognize that distinction.



A Call for Collaboration

Our team reviewed the iOS 26 public beta and was encouraged to see “*Filter Unknown Senders*” is off by default, while “*Filter Spam*” remains on—unchanged from past versions.

It’s vital Apple keep this default setting opt-in to avoid silencing millions of lawful political messages.

We respectfully ask:

- Apple pauses the release of the feature to allow time to study the impact on democratic speech.
- Let users decide. Give iPhone users the choice to filter messages—not a default they may never know exists.
- Honor verified senders. Follow the same compliance standards already respected by major carriers.
- Collaborate with industry. Peerly and the P2P Alliance- RPT—are leaders in responsible political messaging—are ready to help Apple ensure iOS 26 protects privacy, supports democratic engagement, and effectively eliminates spam without blocking legitimate messages.

Political texting—when done responsibly—is one of the few communication tools left that gives every candidate a fair shot at reaching voters. iOS 26, if implemented as described, could threaten that right overnight.

Free elections require free speech. Let’s protect both.

We look forward to collaborating.

Respectfully,

The P2P Alliance for Responsible Political Texting & Peerly Inc.
CC: Tim Cook, CEO, Apple Inc. & Apple Public Policy & Government Affairs

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