



For Immediate Release

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## Rep. Pitts calls defeat of Schumer Amendment a victory for free speech

**Washington**—Congressman Joe Pitts (R, PA-16) today commended the United States Senate for rejecting the Schumer Amendment to the Bankruptcy Reform bill by a vote of 43-56. In the past, this provision has been the poison pill to bankruptcy reform, particularly in 2002 when Congressman Pitts and a handful of other members successfully led opposition to it in the House. The Senate is continuing debate on the legislation.

“Bankruptcy reform is necessary and long overdue,” said Congressman Pitts. “But we should not use the push for reform as an opportunity to sneak in an attack on peaceful protesters.”

The Schumer amendment would make nondischargeable in bankruptcy civil liabilities incurred as a result of allegations that the debtor has violated either the Federal Access to Clinic Entrance (FACE) Act or the Church Arson Prevention Act. Fines for acts of violence are already not dischargeable under bankruptcy law.

On September 18, 2002 Senator Schumer himself told NPR that his efforts were targeted at peaceful protesters. An audio file of Senator Schumer’s statement can be heard in the All Things Considered archive for September 18, 2002 at [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) in a story titled “Federal Appeals Court Nominee.”

“Senator Schumer’s amendment specifically targeted a select group of peaceful protesters who he doesn’t agree with,” continued Congressman Pitts. “I commend the Senate for opposing this effort to subvert the constitutional rights of peaceful protesters. This is a victory for free speech.”

“Many of the fines cited by Senator Schumer today are already nondischargeable under current law. However, his amendment would have expanded current law to include liability incurred from allegations of illegal activity or unintentional acts of wrongdoing. It would have been disastrous if this had passed. Democracy really dodged a bullet today,” concluded Congressman Pitts.

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