

NEWS RELEASE

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The Hartford Cancels Nonprofit Policy, Raising Free Speech Issues

HARTFORD - The Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG) today issued a letter demanding that The Hartford reverse its cancellation of coverage for a nonprofit which was triggered by the nonprofit's education around environmental issues and political advocacy.

The Southern Adirondack Audubon Society's insurance policy was not renewed by The Hartford, due to its environmental education and political advocacy, according to [a news report](#).

"The hypocrisy is staggering, as they have represented themselves as a responsible business taking action on climate change," said CCAG Executive Director Tom Swan. "But worse than that is the bald implication that The Hartford will refuse to insure organizations whose views they do not agree with."

"We must say that this is very problematic on a number of fronts," CCAG's letter reads. "Is The Hartford basing underwriting on the content of speech, or the mission of, customers? If so, when was this policy adopted and what does it entail?"

"...We urge you to renounce your letter to the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, commit to nondiscrimination regarding political speech in your underwriting, and to publicly share progress and plan to achieve real sustainability across all business," the letter continues.

Samantha Dynowski, State Director of the Sierra Club, added: "Let us remember that climate change has forced us to wear masks here in Connecticut to safely breathe due to wildfires in Canada. It has brought devastating flooding and dangerous heat. Environmental advocacy is critical to protecting communities from climate impacts. We are appalled at The Hartford's decision to pull insurance from the Southern Adirondack Audubon Society, and call for an immediate reversal."

George Stone, one of two co-founders of Third Act CT, also expressed grave concern. "This action by The Hartford is a stunning turnabout for a corporation which states on its website ' At the Hartford, we recognize the risks that climate change presents ... and ...that the insurance industry has a role to play in managing and mitigating those risks as part of the global economy and it energy transition.' " Stone said.

"This appears to be an effort to 'obey in advance,' as Yale Professor Timothy Snyder describes corporations that anticipate pressure from a would-be autocrat," Stone continued. "This chilling effect on free speech and on environmental advocacy from a Connecticut corporation is of deep concern to Third Act CT and our members across the state. We are elders who know how dangerous actions like this are and we are here to defend democracy, free speech and the environment."

CCAG's letter to The Hartford is [here](#).

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