Letter of Concern and Support Regarding the Cluster of Excellence
“Normative Ordnungen” of the University of Frankfurt

November 14, 2017

We are writing to express in the strongest possible terms our concern and disappointment that the Cluster of Excellence “Normative Ordnungen” of the University of Frankfurt has been denied by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft an extension of their funding for their scientific work. During the past ten years, many of us have collaborated with our colleagues of the “Cluster” by way of research, writing, publication and teaching. We have produced important volumes together with members of the “Cluster,” we have organized exciting conferences, and we have helped to train excellent students who have moved on to positions in many universities of the world. In short, we think that our Frankfurt colleagues have established a powerful center for the philosophical as well as empirical study of the most important social, political, and ethical questions of our time that is second to no other worldwide in terms of the quality and originality of their research.

To be sure, we are not criticizing the integrity of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft’s process of evaluation: undoubtedly, our colleagues there had many factors to take into account in reaching their judgment. But we believe that Normative Orders has truly excelled in fulfilling the intellectual goals at which the German excellence initiative has been aiming. It would be a terrible loss to the international scholarly community, not only in the USA but in a great many countries around the world, if the work of the Cluster were to be discontinued.

We want to express our sincere hope that the political authorities in Hessen as well as other institutions of support for research in Germany will do their utmost to assure the continuity of this extremely successful Cluster.
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