

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable John McCain  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose proposals that would politicize the charitable nonprofit and philanthropic community by repealing or weakening current federal tax law protections that prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates.

Nonpartisanship is a cornerstone principle that has strengthened the public's trust of the charitable community. In exchange for enjoying tax-exempt status and the ability to receive tax-deductible contributions, 501(c)(3) organizations – charitable nonprofits, including religious congregations, and foundations – agree to not engage in “any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.”

That provision of law protects the integrity and independence of charitable nonprofits and foundations. It shields the entire 501(c)(3) community against the rancor of partisan politics so the charitable community can be a safe haven where individuals of all beliefs come together to solve community problems free from partisan divisions. It screens out doubts and suspicions regarding ulterior partisan motives of charitable organizations, as undoubtedly would occur if even just a few charitable organizations engaged in partisan politics. Nonpartisan credibility is critical to the ability of 501(c)(3) organizations to work with elected officials of all parties at the local, state, and federal levels to address community needs.

Charitable nonprofits, including religious congregations, are free to speak on important matters of the day and advocate on public policy issues and legislation. Private foundations, while barred from most lobbying activities, are free to engage in public debates, promote public education efforts, and fund a wide range of issue-focused activities. The relevant language in Section 501(c)(3) merely prohibits partisan campaign intervention, defined to include endorsing or opposing candidates for public office, publishing or distributing statements for or against candidates, or using tax-deductible and other resources to support partisan campaign activities.

We are united in opposing any and all efforts to weaken or repeal this longstanding protection in the federal tax code (sometimes called the Johnson Amendment) that President Eisenhower signed into law in 1954. Weakening the law by allowing leaders of individual 501(c)(3) entities to endorse candidates for public office and engage in some partisan electioneering activities would damage the integrity and effectiveness of all charitable organizations and spawn litigation as innovative partisans seek to expand gray areas in the proposed legislation. Repealing the Johnson Amendment, an approach promoted by the President and some in Congress, would damage the federal Treasury as people take tax deductions for political contributions they could then funnel through charitable nonprofits, undercut fair elections by providing a loophole to avoid campaign contribution disclosure laws, and empower politicians to exert pressure for access to foundation assets and charitable funds for their own partisan campaigns rather than for the public good.

April 5, 2017

Page 2

We urge you to join us in opposing efforts to weaken and/or repeal the current law that for six decades has successfully protected the integrity and effectiveness of charitable nonprofits and foundations by keeping them apart from partisan politics.

Respectfully,

**Arizona Organizations**

A Stepping Stone Foundation	Phoenix	Circle the City	
Advanced Independence Charity	Sun City	Cochise Canine Rescue	Benson
Alan R Davidson, PLLC	Phoenix	Community Foundation for Southern Arizona	Tucson
Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits		Compass Affordable Housing, Inc.	Tucson
Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation	Tucson	Cornucopia Community Advocates	Sedona
American Heart Association	Phoenix	Cortney's Place	Scottsdale
Arizona Autism United	Phoenix	Creating the Future	Tucson
Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Phoenix	Cultural Arts Coalition	Tempe
Arizona Community Foundation	Phoenix	D'Artz International	Scottsdale
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers	Phoenix	Downtown Radio	
Arizona Family Planning Council, Inc.		Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona	Phoenix
Arizona Grantmakers Forum	Phoenix	Eagles Wings of Grace, Int'l.	Tucson
Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce		Elfrida Citizens Alliance Inc.	Elfrida
Arizona Humanities	Phoenix	Empower International	Gilbert
Arizona YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix	Phoenix	Eve's Place Inc.	Phoenix
Arts for All Inc.	Tucson	Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival	Flagstaff
Assist To Independence	Tuba City	Flinn Foundation	
Backpacks 4 Kids AZ Inc.	Tolleson	Friends of the Library - Kingman	Kingman
Bisbee Restoration Association and Historical Society (Museum), Inc.	Hereford	Friends of the San Pedro River	Hereford
Black Canyon Historical Society	Black Canyon City	Gabriel's Angels	Phoenix
Boxer Luv Rescue	Phoenix	Global Youth Delegation For Peace and Tolerance	Scottsdale
Boys & Girls Club of Kingman	Kingman	Grants On Track, LLC	Phoenix
Cancer Survivors Circle of Strength of AZ	Phoenix	Growing Alternative Resource Development and Enterprise Network (GARDEN), Inc.	Tucson
Caritas Law Group, PC	Tempe	Heritage Designs	Phoenix
Cave Creek Museum		HR Foundations AZ	Cave Creek
Celebrate Volunteers	Glendale	ICM Food & Clothing Bank	Phoenix
Center Stage Communications	Chandler	Inspired Connections	Phoenix
Central Arizona Shelter Services	Phoenix	It Is, Inc. d/b/a 'Tis	Prescott
Chandler Symphony Orchestra	Chandler	Jewish Free Loan	
Child and Family Resources, Inc.	Tucson	Kimetta Coleman Ministries	Phoenix
Child Crisis Arizona	Mesa	Lead for Change	Cave Creek
Children's Action Alliance	Phoenix	Leading For Change	Phoenix
Childsplay	Tempe	Literacy Connects	Tucson
Chrysalis Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, Inc.	Phoenix	LPFM Downtown Tucson	Tucson
		Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest	Phoenix
		Make Way for Books	Tucson
		Metropolitan Education Commission	Tucson
		Mi Familia Vota Education Fund	Phoenix
		My Heart His Palace Christian	Scottsdale

International Ministries  
 NAMI Southern Arizona Tucson  
 Native Seeds/SEARCH Tucson  
 Neighbors Who Care, Inc. Sun Lakes  
 Neurofit Networks Tucson  
 NPC Friends and Family Taylor  
 Old Pueblo Community Services Tucson  
 ONE - The Organization for Nonprofit Executives Litchfield Park  
 one n ten Phoenix  
 Our Family Services Tucson  
 Positive Paths Mesa  
 Prescott Meals On Wheels Prescott  
 Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition Phoenix  
 Read Better Be Better Phoenix  
 ReInventing ReEntry Fountain Hills  
 Saguaro Foundation Community Living Programs Yuma  
 Save the Family Foundation of AZ Mesa  
 Sky Island Alliance Tucson  
 Sonoran Glass School Tucson  
 Soroptimist International of Phoenix, Inc. Phoenix  
 Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center, SEAHEC, Inc. Arizona  
 St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance Phoenix  
 Stardust Non-Profit Building Supplies Mesa  
 Strategy + Action/Philanthropy Tucson  
 Sustainable Economic Development Initiative of Northern Arizona Flagstaff  
 Take Charge America, Inc. Phoenix  
 TechTHiNQ Phoenix  
 The Bidstrup Foundation Paradise Valley  
 The Cagney Company Tempe  
 The David and Lura Lovell Foundation Tucson  
 The Hearth Foundation Tucson  
 The New Foundation Scottsdale  
 Theatre Artists Studio Phoenix  
 Trellis Phoenix  
 Tucson Foundations Tucson  
 Tucson Urban League Tucson  
 Urbanly DIVA Inc. Phoenix  
 Warehouse Arts Management Organization Tucson  
 West Greenway Bible Church  
 WHEAT, the World Hunger Education, Advocacy & Training organization Phoenix

World Youth Visit and Exchange of Arizona Phoenix  
 Yavapai Food Council Sedona  
 Young Artist Society Mesa

**National Organizations**

Abila  
 Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.  
 AdoptAClassroom.org  
 Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  
 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  
 American Alliance of Museums  
 American Association of Anatomists  
 American Association of Physics Teachers  
 American Association of Teachers of German  
 American Bladder Cancer Society  
 American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine  
 American Brass Chamber Music Association  
 American Conference of Academic Deans  
 American Heart Association  
 American Historical Association  
 American Jewish Committee  
 American Medical Association Foundation  
 American Physiological Society  
 American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.  
 American Red Cross  
 Americans for the Arts  
 Americans Promoting Study Abroad  
 Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
 Amyloidosis Foundation  
 Annie E. Casey Foundation  
 Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center  
 Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals  
 Association of American Colleges and Universities  
 Association of Art Museum Directors  
 Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel  
 Association of Fundraising Professionals  
 Association of Immunization Managers  
 Association of Nature Center Administrators  
 Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice  
 Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty  
 Baptist Women in Ministry  
 Barr Foundation  
 BoardSource  
 Brady Campaign and Center to Prevent Gun Violence

Camp Fire  
Campion Foundation  
Catholic Charities USA  
Catholic Mobilizing Network  
Center for Health, Environment & Justice  
Center for Inquiry  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Citizen Schools  
CleanSlateNow  
Commonwealth Fund  
Council on Foundations  
Council for Global Equality  
Dance USA  
Dementia Society, Inc.  
Democracy 21  
Destination & Travel Foundation  
Dietel Partners, LLC  
Disability Rights Advocacy Fund  
Ecology Project International  
Engineering Conferences International  
Feed the Children  
Feeding America  
Food & Water Watch  
Ford Foundation  
Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers  
Free Press  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Girls Inc.  
Global Integrity  
Goodwill Industries, International  
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations  
Greater Nonprofits  
GuideStar  
Habitat for Humanity International  
Harbor Compliance  
HawkWatch International  
Hindu American Foundation  
Histiocytosis Foundation  
Horizons National  
Human Science Institute  
Independent Sector  
International Essential Tremor Foundation  
International Hearing Dog, Inc.  
International Performing Arts for Youth  
International Primate Protection League  
Issue One  
Jessie Ball DuPont Fund  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Leadership USA  
League of American Orchestras  
League of Women Voters  
Leukemia Research Foundation  
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education  
Lumina Foundation  
Lymphoma Foundation of America  
Migraine Research Foundation  
Mentors International  
Morino Ventures, LLC  
National Association of Charitable Gift Planners  
National Association of Health Data Organizations  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)  
National Association of Watch and Collectors  
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Center for Fire and Life Safety  
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
National Council of Behavioral Health  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Nonprofits  
National Dance Education Organization  
National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence  
National Human Services Assembly  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National LGBTQ Task Force  
National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation  
National Runaway Safeline  
National Safe Place Network  
National Tongan American Society  
NEO Law Group  
North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation  
OPERA America  
Partnership for America's Children  
Pension Fund of the Christian Church  
Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement  
Project Wet Foundation  
Project Managers Without Borders  
Public Citizen  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Secular Coalition for America  
Senior Executives Association  
Seva Foundation  
Skillman Foundation  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Smith's Food and Drug

**Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship**

April 5, 2017

Page 5

Arizona

Social Velocity  
The Arc of the United States  
The Aspen Institute  
The Commonwealth Fund  
The Dibble Institute  
The Educational Foundation of America  
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation  
The Ocean Foundation  
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
The Voter Participation Center  
TIDES  
Unemployment Services Trust  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Way Worldwide  
University Professional & Continuing  
Education Association  
US Lacrosse  
Vasculitis Foundation  
Volunteers of America  
Voto Latino  
Wallace Global Fund  
WasteWater Education  
Weingart Foundation  
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
Words Without Borders  
World Day of Prayer USA  
World Neighbors, Inc.  
Youth Services America  
YWCA USA