

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Martha McSally
510 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McSally:

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.

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

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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