

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
2083 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Roybal-Allard:

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,

California Organizations

| | | | |
|--|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 10u Veteran, Inc. | Palm Springs | Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden | Palo Alto |
| A Place Called Home | Los Angeles | Exponent Partners | San Francisco |
| Abrams Consulting | Santa Rosa | Facing History and Ourselves, Friends for Youth | San Francisco |
| AchieveKids | | Family Care Network, Inc. | San Luis Obispo |
| Agile Rascal Theatre | San Francisco | Family Service Association | Hemet |
| Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center | Ukiah | First Graduate | |
| Americans United for Separation of Church and State | Santa Monica | Friedman Consulting | |
| Americans United for Separation of Church and State Orange County CA | Costa Mesa | Galileo Coaching | Santa Barbara |
| Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Kern County, CA | Bakersfield | Garfield Foundation | Lafayette |
| Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Sacramento CA Chapter | Sacramento | Get Smart Africa | Douala, Cameroon |
| Art Without Limits | Santa Barbara | Girls Inc. of Orange County | Costa Mesa |
| Asian Pacific Community Fund | Los Angeles | Greater Nonprofits | Merced |
| Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area | Rancho Mirage | Guiamar Hiegert, CFRE & Associates | Trinidad |
| Association of Fundraising Professionals, Orange County | Santa Ana | Habitat for Humanity for San Luis Obispo County | San Luis Obispo |
| C. S. Fund | Freestone | Habitat For Humanity Greater San Francisco, Inc. | San Francisco |
| CA Destination Imagination | | Habitat for Humanity of Orange County | Santa Ana |
| California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits) | San Francisco | Heart to Heart | Oakland |
| Catalina Island Museum | Avalon | Hoff Consulting | Long Beach |
| Charities Housing | San Jose | InConcert Sierra | Grass Valley |
| Child Advocates of Silicon Valley | | InspiraLaw | |
| Chinatown Service Center | Los Angeles | International Community Foundation | National City |
| Cinnabar Arts Corporation | | Inverness Associates | Berkeley |
| Community Foundation of the Valleys | Los Angeles | Janis Brewer Consulting | Oakland |
| Community Medical Centers | Fresno | Jewish Family & Children's Service of Long Beach & West Orange County | Long Beach |
| Creativity Explored | San Francisco | Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles | Los Angeles |
| Crossroads, Inc. | Claremont | Jewish Family Service of San Diego | San Diego |
| Crystal Springs Uplands School | Hillsborough | Koreatown Youth and Community Center | Los Angeles |
| Davis Wright Tremaine LLP | San Francisco | Krafty Marketing Solutions | |
| Earle Baum Center of the Blind, Inc. | | Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church | Oakland |
| Eddington Advisory Services | Mill Valley | League of California Community Foundations | |
| Effective Nonprofits | | Life Skills Training and Educational Programs, Inc. - LifeSTEPS | Fair Oaks |
| Eleanor Smith & Associates | | | |

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California

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| LifeRing Recovery | Berkeley | San Diego Youth Symphony & Conservatory | San Diego |
| Lighthouse Philanthropy Advisors | San Jose | San Luis Obispo Symphony | Atascadero |
| Lincoln | Oakland | Santa Monica Conservancy | Santa Monica |
| Live Oak Adult Day Services | San Jose | Santa Ynez Valley Arts Assoc. | |
| Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra | Los Angeles | SBCC Foundation | Santa Barbara |
| Los Angeles LGBT Center | Los Angeles | Seva Foundation | Berkeley |
| LSH Foundation | Long Beach | Sierra HOPE | Angels Camp |
| Maternal and Child Health Access | Los Angeles | Sierra Repertory Theatre | Sonora |
| Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula, Inc. | Pacific Grove | Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange | Mountain View |
| Mission Edge | San Diego | Silicon Valley Community Foundation | Mountain View |
| Mona Bismarck American Center | Los Angeles | Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits | San Jose |
| Morgan Family Foundation | | Solar Richmond | Richmond |
| Mosaic Consulting and Coaching | San Jose | Somos Mayfair | San Jose |
| Nashashibi International Consultants, LLC | Laguna Hills | South Asian Network | Artesia |
| NEO Law Group | San Francisco | Speech and Language Development Center | Buena Park |
| NKR Consulting | Sunnyvale | St. Ignatius College Preparatory | |
| Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County | | Strawberry Seals Inc. | San Francisco |
| Not Man Apart Physical Theatre | Los Angeles | Surrogate Gallery Projects | |
| Notre Dame de Namur University | Belmont | SWEA | |
| Oakland Museum of California | Oakland | Swift Foundation | Los Osos |
| Pacific Community Ventures | San Francisco | Teen Success, Inc. | Milpitas |
| Pacific Links Foundation | | The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine | San Francisco |
| Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust | Watsonville | The Christensen Fund | San Francisco |
| Pasadena Conservatory of Music | Pasadena | The Dibble Institute | |
| Paso Pacifico | Ventura | The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden | Palo Alto |
| Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation | Eureka | The Lawrence Welk Family Foundation | Los Angeles |
| Peninsula Family Service | San Mateo | Theresa Nelson & Associates | Oakland |
| Philanthropy California (a joint initiative of Northern California Grantmakers, San Diego Grantmakers, and Southern California Grantmakers) | Los Angeles | Tides | San Francisco |
| Point Foundation | Los Angeles | TR Brown Consulting | |
| Pro Kids, The First Tee of San Diego | San Diego | Unemployment Services Trust | |
| Rancho Santa Fe Foundation | | Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert | Rancho Mirage |
| Recovery Cafe San Jose | San Jose | United Way of Kern County | Bakersfield |
| Regenerate California Innovation | Clovis | United Ways of California | |
| Respite and Research for Alzheimer's Disease | San Jose | Unleashing Generosity / Triskeles Foundation | Tiburon |
| Richmond Community Foundation | Richmond | Vegan Outreach | Davis |
| Rochester Institute of Technology | Los Altos | Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired | Palo Alto |
| Sadlon & Associates, Inc. | Glendale | Weingart Foundation | Los Angeles |
| San Diego Advocates for Social Justice | San Diego | Western Methodist Justice Movement | Los Angeles |
| San Diego Public Library Foundation | San Diego | William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | |
| | | Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management | California |

WomenShelter of Long Beach Long Beach
Youssef and Kamel Mawardi Fund Riverside
YWCA of North Orange County Fullerton

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
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