

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable John Larson  
1501 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Larson:

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,

<b>Connecticut Organizations</b>			
Almada Lodge - Times Farm Camp Corp. (d/b/a Channel 3 Kids Camp)	Andover	Community Renewal Team	Hartford
American School for the Deaf	West Hartford	Community Residences Inc.	Newington
Annie C. Courtney Foundation, Inc.	Waterbury	Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families, Inc.	Connecticut
ARC of Greater New Haven	Hamden	Connecticut Association for the Gifted	Stamford
Arc of Meriden Wallingford, Inc.	Meriden	Connecticut Community Foundation	Waterbury
ARCGH		Connecticut Council for Philanthropy	Hartford
ARI of Connecticut, Inc.	Stamford	Connecticut Forest & Park Association	Rockfall
Autism Services and Resources Connecticut	Wallingford	Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.	Middletown
Benhaven	North Haven	Creative Arts Workshop	New Haven
Beth-El Center, Inc.	Milford	CSSD Judicial branch	New Haven
Bethsaida Community, Inc.	Norwich	CT Association of Area Agencies on Aging	Hartford
BHcare	North Haven	CT Coalition on Aging (CCOA)	New Haven
Brass City Harvest, Inc.	Waterbury	CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance)	
Bridgemill Foundation	New Canaan	CT State Independent Living Council	Farmington
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition	Bridgeport	Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc.	
Bridges	Milford	Domus Kids Inc.	Stamford
Boroughs Community Center	Bridgeport	E. Brown Trust	
CARE		Easter Seals-Greater Waterbury	Waterbury
Catholic Charities - Archdiocese of Hartford	Hartford	Fairfield County's Community Foundation	Norwalk
Catholic Charities of Fairfield County	Bridgeport	Families Network of Western Connecticut, Inc.	Danbury
CCARC, Inc.	New Britain	Family Centered Services of CT, Inc.	New Haven
Center for Latino Progress - CPRF	Hartford	First Choice Health Centers, Inc.	East Hartford
Children's Fund of CT	Farmington	FreeTHEM Foundation, Inc.	Waterbury
Christian Community Action, Inc.	New Haven	Friends of Autistic People	Greenwich
Clifford Beers Clinic	New Haven	Futures, Inc.	Berlin
CNV Help, Inc.	Waterbury	Guardian Ad Litem Services, Inc.	Southbury
Columbus House Inc.	New Haven	Harc, Inc.	Hartford
Communication Advocacy Network, Inc.	Hartford	Hartford Behavioral Health	Hartford
Community Child Guidance Clinic	Manchester	Hartford Performs	Hartford
Community Enterprises, Inc.		Homes with Hope	Westport
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	New London	Hope4homeless	west haven
Community Foundation of Greater New Britain, CT	New Britain	Horizons National	Westport
Community Health Resources	Windsor	Horizons Programs Inc.	South Windham
Community of the Cross Ministries, Inc.		InterCommunity	East Hartford
Community Partners in Action	Hartford	Ironwood Community Partners	Bloomfield
		James H. Napier Foundation	Meriden
		Jewish Association for Community Living	Hartford

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Journey Found		The McCall Center for Behavioral Health	Torrington
Keystone House, Inc.	Norwalk	The New Haven Oratorio Choir, Inc.	New Haven
Klingberg Family Centers		The Open Door Shelter, Inc.	Norwalk
La Grua Center	Stonington	The Open Hearth Association	
LifeBridge Community Services	Bridgeport	The Prentice Foundation	Fairfield
MARC Community Resources	Middletown	The Tow Foundation	New Canaan
Mental Health Connecticut, Inc.	West Hartford	The Vantage Group, Inc.	Wallingford
Mid-Western Connecticut Council of Alcoholism		There's No Place like Home, Inc.	New Haven
Mosaic		UCP of Eastern Connecticut	Quaker Hill
NAMI Connecticut	Hartford	United Way of Connecticut	Rocky Hill
Neighbor to Neighbor	Greenwich	United Way of Western CT	Danbury
NetMark Associates	Canton	VNA Community Healthcare	
Network, Inc.	Andover	West Haven Emergency Assistance Taskforce	West Haven
North Central Regional Mental Health Board Inc.	Hartford	Westport Arts Center	
Northwest Connecticut Arts Council	Torrington	Wheeler Clinic, Inc.	Plainville
Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation	Falls Village	Wintonbury Land Trust	Bloomfield
Nutmeg Statewide PTA	Ridgefield	Women's Center of Greater Danbury	Danbury
Oak Hill		Young Haven Sibling Support	West Haven
Operation Fuel, Inc.	Hartford	Youth Continuum- FREE Program	New Haven
Our Piece of the Pie, Inc.	Hartford		
Pathways/Senderos Center	New Britain		
Prime Time House	Torrington		
Project Youth Court	New Haven		
Re-Entry Assisted Community Housing (REACH)	New Haven		
Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership	Bridgeport		
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Connecticut	New Haven		
ROSCCO Stamford School Community Organization, Inc.	Stamford		
Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury	Waterbury		
SARAH Tuxis Residential & Community Resources, Inc.	Guilford		
Shoreline Arts Alliance	Guilford		
Shoreline Wellness and Behavioral Clinic	West Haven		
Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities, Inc.	Westport		
Solar Youth, Inc.	New Haven		
Spearpoint Strategy Advisors, LLC	Warren		
StayWell Health Care, Inc.	Waterbury		
The Access Agency, Inc.	Willimantic		
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum	Ridgefield		
The Arc of Litchfield County	Torrington		
The Arc of Southington	Southington		
The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport	Bridgeport		

**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

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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