

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
524 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

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>Illinois Organizations</b>			
		Executive Service Corps of Chicago	Chicago
		Facing Forward to End Homelessness	Chicago
Aging Care Connections	La Grange	Family Bridges	Oakbrook Terrace
AIDS Foundation of Chicago	Chicago	Family Focus	Chicago
Allow Good	Chicago	Family Service and Mental Health Center of Cicero	Cicero
Alternatives, Inc.	Chicago	Forefront	Chicago
American Medical Association Foundation	Chicago	Friends of Downtown	Chicago
Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation	Northbrook	Friends of the Chicago River	
Association of Fundraising Professionals - Chicago IL Chapter	Chicago	Gene Siskel Film Center	Chicago
Baker McGee Consulting	Chicago	George M. Pullman Educational Foundation	
Ballet 5:8	Chicago	GrantResources, LLC	
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago	Chicago	Growing Home, Inc.	Chicago
Bridge Communities	Glen Ellyn	Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County	Mahomet
Bright Promise Fund for Urban Christian Education	Chicago	Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley	
Career Resource Center	Lake Forest	Harris Theater for Music and Dance	Chicago
Center for Independent Futures	Evanston	High Concept Labs	Chicago
Chicago Community Loan Fund	Chicago	Holy Family Ministries	Lincolnshire
Chicago Cultural Alliance	Chicago	Housing Institute	Bolingbrook
Chicago Global Health Alliance	Chicago	Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.)	Chicago
Chicago Humanities Festival	Chicago	Illinois Association of Museums	Springfield
Child Care Center of Evanston	Evanston	Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Springfield
Children's Home Society of America	Chicago	Illinois Tech Global Leaders Program	Chicago
Children's Neuroblastoma Cancer Foundation	Bloomingtondale	IL-WI Sertoma Regional Center for Communicative Disorders	Palos Hills
Children's Place Association	Chicago	Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc.	Chicago
Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust	Elgin	JHR Resources	Chicago
College Bound Opportunities	Riverwoods	JOURNEYS   The Road Home	Palatine
Community Behavioral Healthcare Association of Illinois	Springfield	KCCDD	Galesburg
CommunityHealth	Chicago	Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago	Glenview
Connections for the Homeless	Evanston	Land Conservancy of Will County	Frankfort
Creative Partners	Chicago	Latino Policy Forum	Chicago
Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep	Waukegan	Leukemia Research Foundation	
Deborah's Place	Chicago	Levine Partners	Evanston
Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA		Life Quilt Foundation	Chicago
DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform	Lombard	Lumity	Chicago
Ecker Center for Mental Health			
Embarc	Chicago		
Erie Family Health Center	Chicago		
Evanston Community Foundation	Evanston		

McAlpine Consulting for Growth, LLC Chicago  
 Mercy Home for Boys & Girls Chicago  
 Mission of Our Lady of Mercy, Inc. Chicago  
 Mutual Ground, Inc. Aurora  
 Naper Settlement Naperville  
 National Louis University Chicago  
 National Runaway Safeline Chicago  
 NextLevelNPO, LLC Chicago  
 Nineteenth Century Charitable Association  
 Nonprofit-Partners Forest Park  
 Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence Rockford  
 Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry Oak Park  
 Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation Oak Park  
 Palatine Township Senior Citizens Council Palatine  
 PATH, Inc. Bloomington  
 Pierce Family Foundation  
 Pillars LaGrange Park  
 Polk Bros. Foundation Chicago  
 Prevention Partnership, Inc. Chicago  
 QC Arts Rock Island  
 Quarles & Brady LLP  
 RAD Remedy Chicago  
 S. Wolf and Associates Chicago  
 Schield Family Foundation Wilmette  
 Shelter Care Ministries Rockford  
 Sherrie Marchi Coaching Palatine  
 St. Helena's Church Burr Ridge  
 Swan Isle Press Chicago  
 The Chicago Music Consortium Bolingbrook  
 The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust Chicago  
 The Friendship Center Chicago  
 The Harbour Park Ridge  
 The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Chicago  
 The Seabury Foundation Chicago  
 US Green Building Council Hoffman Estates  
 Us TOO International Des Plaines  
 Waukegan to College Waukegan  
 Wheat Ridge Ministries Oak Park  
 Wishnick & Associates Chicago  
 Writers Theatre Glencoe  
 Youth and Opportunity United Evanston  
 Youth Outreach Services, Inc. Chicago  
 YWCA - Canton Canton  
 YWCA - Kankakee Kankakee  
 YWCA - Elgin Elgin  
 YWCA of the University of Illinois Champaign

ZION Development Corporation Rockford

**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  
 Champion 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

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**Illinois**

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