

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Andy Barr  
1427 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Barr:

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.

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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,

**Kentucky Organizations**

Actors Theatre of Louisville	Louisville	Habilitation Information Vocation & Education, Inc.	Bowling Green
Americana Community Center, Inc.		Habitat for Humanity of Madison & Clark Counties	Richmond
AOB Consulting	Louisville	Hand in Hand	Louisville
Appalachian Horse Center	Lexington	Heart Of KY United Way	Danville
bmtconsulting		Henry Clay Memorial Foundation	Lexington
Boys & Girls Club of Franklin Simpson	Franklin	Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation	Louisville
BUILD	Lexington	Hilliard Lyons Trust Company, LLC	Louisville
CASA		Homeless & Housing Coalition of KY	Frankfort
Catholic Charities Diocese of Lexington	Lexington	Hosparus Health	Louisville
Catholic Diocese of Lexington	Lexington	Independence Place, Inc.	Lexington
Children's Alliance of Kentucky	Frankfort	Innovation Arts Academy, Inc.	Lexington
Center for Nonprofit Excellence	Louisville	International Order of EARS	Crestwood
Choices, Inc.	Louisville	ITNBluegrass	Lexington
Christian Appalachian Project	Paintsville	KEENStart	Lexington
Community Arts Center, Inc.	Danville	Kentuckiana Health Collaborative	Louisville
Cumberland Mountain Arts & Crafts Council, Inc	Jenkins	Kentucky Academy of Science	
Cumberland Trails United Way	Middlesboro	Kentucky Association of Food Banks	Berea
Day Spring Community Living	Louisville	Kentucky CancerLink	Lexington
Estill Arts Council, Inc.	Irvine	Kentucky Center for the Arts	Louisville
FairThreads, LLC.	Louisville	Kentucky Council of Churches	Lexington
Family & Children's Place	Louisville	Kentucky Environmental Foundation	Berea
Food Pantry For Woodford County	Versailles	Kentucky Equal Justice Center	Lexington
Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky	Louisville	Kentucky Foundation for Women	Louisville
Friend for Life Cancer Support Network	Louisville	Kentucky Habitat for Humanity, Inc.	Louisville
Friends of Hardin County Animal Shelter	Elizabeth-town	Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation	London
Fullanthropy	Louisville	Kentucky Nonprofit Network	Lexington
Gateway Homeless Coalition	Morehead	Kentucky Primary Care Association, Inc.	Frankfort
GB Facilitation & Training Works	Frankfort	Kentucky Psychological Foundation	
Girl Scouts of Kentucky's Wilderness Road	Lexington	Kentucky Railway Museum	New Haven
Girls, Inc. of Owensboro Daviess County		Kentucky Voices for Health	Louisville
Grace and Mercy	Hopkinsville	Kidney Health Alliance of KY	Lexington
Grace and Mercy KY, Inc.	Hopkinsville	KY Circuit Court Clerks' Trust For Life	Louisville
Graves County Child Advocacy Program	Mayfield	Ky. Native American Heritage Museum, Inc.	Corbin
GreenHouse17		Leaping Minnow Consulting	Berea

Leslie County Food Pantry	Hyden	UK Markey Cancer Foundation	Lexington
Lexington Community Land Trust	Lexington	United Way of Franklin County	Frankfort
Life Adventure Center	Versailles	United Way of Kentucky	
Living Arts & Science Center	Lexington	United Way of Mason County	Maysville
LOKR		United Way of Murray Calloway County	Murray
Lost River Cave	Bowling Green	United Way of Northeast Kentucky	Ashland
Louisville Independent Business Alliance	Louisville	United Way of the Bluegrass	Lexington
LUL	Louisville	Ursuline Sisters	
Making A Difference Now (MADN)	Lexington	Warm Blessings Soup Kitchen	
Matthew 25 AIDS Services	Henderson	William D. Clifton, Esq.	
Mattingly Edge	Louisville	Women Leading Kentucky	Lexington
Mayfield-Graves County United Way	Mayfield	Woodford Theatre	Versailles
Mentoring Plus, Inc.	Newport	YouthBuild Louisville	Louisville
Metro United Way	Louisville		
MG Coaching and Consulting			
Morehead State University Center for Regional Engagement	Morehead		
My Purple Friends Epilepsy Awareness	Lexington		
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)	Lexington		
National Safe Place Network	Louisville		
Nazareth Villages	Nazareth		
Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency			
Office for Housing and Community Development	Louisville		
Paris Animal Welfare Society	Paris		
Passionist Earth & Spirit Center	Louisville		
Pfc. Richard L. Vanover Veterans Village, Inc.	Somerset		
Presbyterian Homes and Services of Kentucky, Inc.	Louisville		
Publishers Inc.	Louisville		
Radio Eye	Lexington		
Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky, Inc.	Louisville		
SEAM	Louisville		
Southern Roofing Building & General Contracting, Inc.	Kentucky		
Southwest Community Ministries	Louisville		
St. Joseph Children's Home	Louisville		
St. Vincent Mission, Inc.	David		
Strive, Inc.	Louisville		
Summit Christian University	Mayfield		
Sustainable Business Ventures Corporation	Lexington		
The Luci Center			
The Pete Foundation	Louisville		
The Shine House, Inc.	Somerset		

### 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

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**Kentucky**

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