

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Flake
413 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Flake:

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			
501 Navigation	Tucson	Boys & Girls Club of Kingman	Kingman
A Stepping Stone Foundation	Phoenix	Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona	Phoenix
Advanced Independence Charity	Sun City	Business Mentor Team	Scottsdale
Alan R Davidson, PLLC	Phoenix	Cancer Survivors Circle of Strength of AZ	Phoenix
Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits		Caritas Law Group, PC	Tempe
Allied Arts Council	Lake Havasu City	Cave Creek Museum	
Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation	Tucson	Celebrate Volunteers Center Stage	Glendale
American Heart Association	Phoenix	Communications	Chandler
Archaeology Southwest	Tucson	Central Arizona Shelter Services	Phoenix
Arizona Autism United	Phoenix	Chandler Symphony Orchestra	Chandler
Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Phoenix	Child and Family Resources, Inc.	Tucson
Arizona Community Foundation	Phoenix	Child Crisis Arizona	Mesa
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers	Phoenix	Children's Action Alliance	Phoenix
Arizona Family Planning Council, Inc.		Childsplay	Tempe
Arizona Grantmakers Forum	Phoenix	Chrysalis Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, Inc.	Phoenix
Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce		Circle the City	
Arizona Humanities	Phoenix	Cochise Canine Rescue	Benson
Arizona YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix	Phoenix	Community Foundation for Southern Arizona	Tucson
Arts for All, Inc.	Tucson	Compass Affordable Housing, Inc.	Tucson
Ascension Lutheran Church	Paradise Valley	Cornucopia Community Advocates	Sedona
Assist To Independence	Tuba City	Cortney's Place	Scottsdale
Association of Arizona Food Banks	Phoenix	Creating the Future	Tucson
AZ Meds for Vets	Phoenix	Cultural Arts Coalition	Tempe
Backpacks 4 Kids AZ, Inc.	Tolleson	D'Artz International	Scottsdale
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tucson	Tucson	Downtown Radio	
Bisbee Restoration Association and Historical Society (Museum), Inc.	Hereford	Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona	Phoenix
Black Canyon Historical Society	Black Canyon City	Eagles Wings of Grace, Int'l.	Tucson
Boxer Luv Rescue	Phoenix	Earn to Learn	Tucson
		Elfrida Citizens Alliance Inc.	Elfrida
		Empower International	Gilbert
		Eve's Place, Inc.	Phoenix
		Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival	Flagstaff

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Arizona

Flinn Foundation		ONE - The Organization for	
Friends of Navajo County		Nonprofit Executives	Litchfield Park
Anti-Drug Coalition, Inc.	Pinetop-Lakeside	one n ten	Phoenix
Friends of the Library -		Our Family Services	Tucson
Kingman	Kingman	Our Neighbors Farm &	
Friends of the San Pedro		Pantry	Safford
River	Hereford	Phxca, Inc.	Phoenix
Gabriel's Angels	Phoenix	Positive Paths	Mesa
Global Youth Delegation For		Prescott Meals On Wheels	Prescott
Peace and Tolerance	Scottsdale	Prevent Child Abuse Arizona	Prescott Valley
Graceful Fundraising, LLC	Mesa	Protecting Arizona's Family	
Grants On Track, LLC	Phoenix	Coalition	Phoenix
Growing Alternative		Raise the Bar Consulting	
Resource Development		Read Better Be Better	Phoenix
and Enterprise Network		ReInventing ReEntry	Fountain Hills
(GARDEN), Inc.	Tucson	Rossetti Consulting Group	Tucson
Heritage Designs	Phoenix	Rotary Club of Tucson	
HR Foundations AZ	Cave Creek	#1284	Tucson
ICM Food & Clothing Bank	Phoenix	Saguaro Foundation	
Inspired Connections	Phoenix	Community Living	
It Is, Inc. d/b/a 'Tis	Prescott	Programs	Yuma
Jewish Free Loan		Santa Cruz Grants &	
Kimetta Coleman Ministries	Phoenix	Consulting, LLC	Rio Rico
Kingdom Philanthropy	Phoenix	Save the Family Foundation	
Lead for Change	Cave Creek	of AZ	Mesa
Leading For Change	Phoenix	Sky Island Alliance	Tucson
Lighthouse Christian		Smith & Dale Philanthropic	
Community Church		Counsel	Tucson
Literacy Connects	Tucson	Sonoran Glass School	Tucson
Living Streets Alliance	Tucson	Soroptimist International of	
LPFM Downtown Tucson	Tucson	Phoenix, Inc.	Phoenix
Lutheran Social Services of		Southeast Arizona Area	
the Southwest	Phoenix	Health Education Center,	
Make Way for Books	Tucson	SEAHEC, Inc.	
Mesa United Way	Mesa	St. Mary's Food Bank	
Metropolitan Education		Alliance	Phoenix
Commission	Tucson	Stardust Non-Profit Building	
Mi Familia Vota Education		Supplies	Mesa
Fund	Phoenix	Strategy +	
Mount Zion Church	Arizona City	Action/Philanthropy	Tucson
My Heart His Palace		Sue Sirkus, CFRE	Tucson
Christian International		Sustainable Economic	
Ministries	Scottsdale	Development Initiative of	
NAMI Southern Arizona	Tucson	Northern Arizona	Flagstaff
Native Seeds/SEARCH	Tucson	Take Charge America, Inc.	Phoenix
Neighbors Who Care, Inc.	Sun Lakes	TechTHiNQ	Phoenix
Network Life, LLC		Teen Outreach Pregnancy	
Neurofit Networks	Tucson	Services	Tucson
NPC Friends and Family	Taylor	The Bidstrup Foundation	Paradise Valley
Old Pueblo Community		The Cagney Company	Tempe
Services	Tucson	The David and Lura Lovell	
		Foundation	Tucson

The Hearth Foundation	Tucson	Animal Legal Defense Fund
The New Foundation	Scottsdale	Annie E. Casey Foundation
Theatre Artists Studio	Phoenix	Anti-Defamation League
Trellis	Phoenix	Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
Triple Stone Education Support	Phoenix	Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
Tucson Foundations	Tucson	Association of American Colleges and Universities
Tucson Urban League	Tucson	Association of Art Museum Directors
Urbanly DIVA, Inc.	Phoenix	Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel
Vitalyst Health Foundation	Phoenix	Association of Fundraising Professionals
Warehouse Arts Management Organization	Tucson	Association of Immunization Managers
West Greenway Bible Church		Association of Nature Center Administrators
WHEAT, the World Hunger Education, Advocacy & Training organization	Phoenix	Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
World Youth Visit and Exchange of Arizona	Phoenix	Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Yavapai Food Council	Sedona	Baptist Women in Ministry
Young Artist Society	Mesa	Barr Foundation

National Organizations

Abila	Camp Fire
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.	Campion Foundation
AdoptAClassroom.org	Catholic Charities USA
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities	Catholic Mobilizing Network
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation	Center for Health, Environment & Justice
America Solidaria U.S.	Center for Inquiry
American Alliance of Museums	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
American Association of Anatomists	Citizen Schools
American Association of Physics Teachers	CleanSlateNow
American Association of Teachers of German	Commonwealth Fund
American Atheists	Council on Foundations
American Bladder Cancer Society	Council for Global Equality
American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine	Dance USA
American Brass Chamber Music Association	Dementia Society, Inc.
American Conference of Academic Deans	Democracy 21
American Heart Association	Destination & Travel Foundation
American Historical Association	Dietel Partners, LLC
American Jewish Committee	Disability Rights Advocacy Fund
American Medical Association Foundation	Easter Seals
American Physiological Society	Ecology Project International
American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.	Engineering Conferences International
American Red Cross	Episcopal Relief & Development
Americans for the Arts	Feed the Children
Americans Promoting Study Abroad	Feeding America
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	Fidesco USA
Amyloidosis Foundation	Food & Water Watch
	Ford Foundation
	Free Press
	Girl Scouts of the USA
	Girls Inc.

Global Integrity
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
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 Alliance for Law and Social Action
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 4-H Council
National Alliance of Community Economic
Development
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
National Association for Shoplifting
Prevention
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Center for Fire and Life Safety
National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
National Committee for Responsive
Philanthropy
National Council of Behavioral Health
National Council of Churches
National Council of Nonprofits
National Council of Tribes
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 Association of Junior Leagues
International, Inc.
The Commonwealth Fund
The Dibble Institute
The Educational Foundation of America
The George Gund Foundation
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
The Michael J. Fox Foundation
The Ocean Foundation
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation
The United Methodist Church – General
Board of Church and Society
The Voter Participation Center
TIDES
Unemployment Services Trust
Union for Reform Judaism
United Philanthropy Forum
United Way Worldwide

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University Professional & Continuing
Education Association
US Lacrosse
Vasculitis Foundation
Volunteers in Medicine
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