Dear Representative McSally:

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

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Arizona

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

National Organizations

Abila
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.
AdoptAClassroom.org
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
America Solidaria U.S.
American Alliance of Museums
American Association of Anatomists
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Association of Teachers of German
American Atheists
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
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Anti-Defamation League
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
Easter Seals
Ecology Project International
Engineering Conferences International
Episcopal Relief & Development
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Feeding America
Fidesco USA
Food & Water Watch
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HawkWatch International
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Histiocytosis Foundation
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League of American Orchestras
League of Women Voters
Leukemia Research Foundation
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education
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Morino Ventures, LLC
National 4-H Council
National Alliance of Community Economic Development
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NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness
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National Center for Fire and Life Safety
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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
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