The Honorable Tony Cardenas  
1510 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cardenas:

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,

California

10u Veteran, Inc. Palm Springs
A Place Called Home Los Angeles
Abrams Consulting Santa Rosa
AchieveKids San Francisco
Agile Rascal Theatre Oakland
Alameda County Community Food Bank Ukiah
Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center Oakland
Alternatives in Action Bakersfield
Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Kern County, CA
Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Orange County, CA
Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Sacramento CA Chapter
Animal Legal Defense Fund Sacramento
Ann Martin Center Cotati
Art Without Limits Emeryville
Asian Pacific Community Fund Santa Barbara
Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area
Association of Fundraising Professionals, Orange County Los Angeles
Baby2Baby Rancho Mirage
Brooke Foundation Donor Advised Fund at RSF
Butte County Child Abuse Prevention Council Santa Ana
C. S. Fund Los Angeles
CA Destination Imagination Chico
Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation Freestone
California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits) Ventura
California Council of Churches Sacramento
California Council of Churches IMPACT Sacramento
California for Democracy Oakland
California School-Age Consortium Berkeley
Cancer Care Network Foundation Los Angeles
Catalina Island Museum Avalon
Charities Housing San Jose
Child Advocates of Silicon Valley
Chinatown Service Center
ChrisBooks Accounting
Cinnabar Arts Corporation
CLUE: Clergy & Laity United For Economic Justice
Community Education Partnerships
Community Foundation of the Valleys
Community Medical Centers Los Angeles
CompassPoint Nonprofit Services Fresno
Compton Foundation
Create Possibility
San Francisco
Crossroads, Inc.
Crystal Springs Uplands School Claremont
CS Fund
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation
Desert Ability Center
Digital Democracy
La Quinta
Earle Baum Center of the Blind, Inc.
Eddington Advisory Services
Effective Nonprofits
Solano Beach
Eleanor Smith & Associates
San Francisco
Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden
Palo Alto
Exponent Partners
San Francisco
Facing History and Ourselves, Friends for Youth
San Francisco
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

California

Updated September 5, 2017

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Family Care Network, Inc. - San Luis Obispo
Family Resource Center of Truckee - Truckee
Family Service Association of Hemet - Hemet
First Graduate - San Francisco
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano - Concord
Friedman Consulting - Santa Barbara
Galileo Coaching - Lafayette
Garfield Foundation - Douala, Cameroon
Get Smart Africa - Costa Mesa
Girls Inc. of Orange County - Costa Mesa
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees - Merced
Greater Nonprofits - Trinidad
Guiam Hiegert, CFRE & Associates - Los Angeles
Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley - San Jose
Habitat for Humanity of San Luis Obispo County - San Luis Obispo
Habitat For Humanity Greater San Francisco, Inc. - San Francisco
Habitat for Humanity of Orange County - Santa Ana
Health Connected Heart to Heart - Redwood City
Heather Mack Consulting LLC - Oakland
Hoff Consulting - Long Beach
Human Rights Data Analysis Group - San Francisco
If/When/How - Oakland
Impact Young Adults - Grass Valley
InConcert Sierra - Los Angeles
Inland Valley Council of Churches d/b/a Inland Valley Hope Partners - National City
InspiraLaw - Berkeley
Institute for Religious Tolerance, Peace and Justice - Oakland
International Community Foundation - Los Angeles
Inverness Associates - Berkeley
Janis Brewer Consulting - Oakland
Jason Weiner Consulting - Sacramento
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Tides, San Francisco
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TransForm, Oakland
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Tuleyome, Woodland
Unemployment Services Trust
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert, Rancho Mirage
United Way of Kern County, Bakersfield
United Ways of California
Unleashing Generosity / Triskeles Foundation, Tiburon
Vegan Outreach, Davis
Vesper Society, San Francisco
Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Palo Alto
Wave Foundation, Santa Barbara
Waves of Gratefulness, Costa Mesa
Weingart Foundation, Los Angeles
Western Methodist Justice Movement, Los Angeles
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
WomenShelter of Long Beach, Long Beach
Youssef and Kamel Mawardi Fund, Riverside
YWCA of North Orange County, Fullerton

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

**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
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  
Feed the Children  
Feeding America  
Fidesco USA  
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 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
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