The Honorable Nanette Barragan  
1320 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Barragan:

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 Los Angeles
Association of Fundraising Professionals, Orange County Rancho Mirage
Baby2Baby Santa Ana
Brooke Foundation Donor Advised Fund at RSF Foundation Los Angeles
Butte County Child Abuse Prevention Council Rancho Mirage
C. S. Fund Santa Ana
CA Destination Imagination Los Angeles
Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation Chico
California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits) Freestone
California Council of Churches Ventura
California for Democracy San Francisco
California School-Age Consortium LA
Cancer Care Network Foundation Sacramento
Catalina Island Museum Foundation Oakland
Charities Housing San Jose
Child Advocates of Silicon Valley

Chinatown Service Center Los Angeles
ChrisBooks Accounting San Jose
Cinnabar Arts Corporation

CLUE: Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice

Community Education Partnerships

Community Foundation of the Valleys

Community Medical Centers

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

Compton Foundation Solana Beach
Create Possibility San Francisco
Creativity Explored Claremont
Crossroads, Inc.

Crystal Springs Uplands School Hillsborough

CS Fund Freeston

Davis Wright Tremaine LLP San Francisco
Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation

Desert Ability Center La Quinta

Digital Democracy Oakland
Earle Baum Center of the Blind, Inc.

Eddington Advisory Services Mill Valley
Effective Nonprofits

Eleanor Smith & Associates Palo Alto
Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden San Francisco
Exponent Partners

Facing History and Ourselves, Friends for Youth San Francisco

Exponent

Facing History and Ourselves, Friends for Youth

San Francisco
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<tr>
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Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
California

Neighborhood Funders Group
NEO Law Group
NGO Catalyst
Niswa Association, Inc.
NKR Consulting
Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County
Not Man Apart Physical Theatre
Notre Dame de Namur University
Oakland Museum of California
OneJustice
Orange County United Way
Pacific Community Ventures
Pacific Links Foundation
Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
Pasadena Conservatory of Music
Paso Pacifico
Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation
Patriots and Paws
Peninsula Family Service
Philanthropy California (a joint initiative of Northern California Grantmakers, San Diego Grantmakers, and Southern California Grantmakers)
Point Foundation
Pro Kids, The First Tee of San Diego
Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
Recovery Cafe San Jose
rediscovers Center
Regenerate California Innovation
Respite and Research for Alzheimer's Disease
Richmond Community Foundation
Rochester Institute of Technology
Sacramento LGBT Community Center
Sadlon & Associates, Inc.
San Diego Advocates for Social Justice
San Diego Public Library Foundation
San Diego Youth Symphony & Conservatory
San Luis Obispo Symphony
Santa Monica Conservancy
Santa Ynez Valley Arts Assoc.
SBCC Foundation
Seva Foundation
SF LGBT Center
Sierra Repertory Theatre Exchange
Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits
So CA Center for Nonprofit Management
Solar Richmond
Somas Mayfair
South Asian Network
Southern California Center for Nonprofit Management
St. Ignatius College Preparatory
Stapleton School of the Performing Arts
Strawberry Seals, Inc.
Surrogate Gallery Projects
SWEA
Swift Foundation
Teen Success, Inc.
The 5 Gyres Institute
The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
The Christensen Fund
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
The Dibble Institute
The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden
The Fieldstone Foundation
The Lawrence Welk Family Foundation
San Diego
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Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

The Nicholson Family Foundation
The River Project
Theresa Nelson & Associates
Tides
TR Brown Consulting
TransForm
Tri Valley Haven
Tuleyome
Unemployment Services Trust
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
United Way of Kern County
United Ways of California
Unleashing Generosity / Triskeles Foundation
Vegan Outreach
Vesper Society
Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Wave Foundation
Waves of Gratefulness
Weingart Foundation
Western Methodist Justice Movement
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
WomenShelter of Long Beach
Youssef and Kamel Mawardi Fund
YWCA of North Orange County

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  | National Alliance of Community Economic Development  
Dementia Society, Inc.  | National Association of Charitable Gift Planners  
Democracy 21  | National Association of Health Data Organizations  
Destination & Travel Foundation  | National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)  
Dietel Partners, LLC  | National Association of Watch and Collectors  
Disability Rights Advocacy Fund  | National Association for Shoplifting Prevention  
Easter Seals  | NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Ecology Project International  | National Center for Appropriate Technology  
Engineering Conferences International  | National Center for Fire and Life Safety  
Episcopal Relief & Development  | National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome  
Feed the Children  | National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
Feeding America  | National Council of Behavioral Health  
Fidesco USA  | National Council of Churches  
Food & Water Watch  | National Council of Nonprofits  
Ford Foundation  | National Council of Tribes  
Free Press  | National Dance Education Organization  
Girl Scouts of the USA  | National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence  
Girls Inc.  | National Human Services Assembly  
Global Integrity  | National Indian Child Welfare Association  
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.  | National LGBTQ Task Force  
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations  | National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation  
Greater Nonprofits  | National Runaway Safeline  
GuideStar  | National Safe Place Network  
Habitat for Humanity International  | National Tongan American Society  
Harbor Compliance  | NEO Law Group  
HawkWatch International  | North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation  
Hindu American Foundation  | OPERA America  
Histiocytosis Foundation  | Partnership for America's Children  
Horizons National  | Pension Fund of the Christian Church  
Human Science Institute  | Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement  
Independent Sector  | Project Wet Foundation  
International Essential Tremor Foundation  | Project Managers Without Borders  
International Hearing Dog, Inc.  | Public Citizen  
International Performing Arts for Youth  | Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
International Primate Protection League  | Secular Coalition for America  
Issue One  | Senior Executives Association  
Jessie Ball DuPont Fund  | Seva Foundation  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  | Skillman Foundation  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  | Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Jewish Federations of North America  | Smith's Food and Drug  
Leadership USA  | Social Velocity  
League of American Orchestras  | The Arc of the United States  
League of Women Voters  | The Aspen Institute  
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Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education  |  
Lumina Foundation  |  
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Migraine Research Foundation  |  
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Morino Ventures, LLC  |  
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National Association of Health Data Organizations  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)  
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NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
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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