The Honorable Dana Rohrabacher  
2300 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rohrabacher:

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 Costa Mesa
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
Ann Martin Center
Art Without Limits
Asian Pacific Community Fund
Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area
Association of Fundraising Professionals, Orange County
Baby2Baby
Brooke Foundation Donor Advised Fund at RSF Foundation
Butte County Child Abuse Prevention Council
C. S. Fund
CA Destination Imagination
Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation
California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits)
California Council of Churches
California Council of Churches IMPACT
California for Democracy
California School-Age Consortium
Cancer Care Network Foundation
Catalina Island Museum
Charities Housing
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
CompassPoint Nonprofit Services
Compton Foundation
Create Possibility
Creativity Explored
Crossroads, Inc.
Crystal Springs Uplands School
CS Fund
Davis Wright Tremaine LLP Foundation
Dean & Margaret Lesher
Desert Ability Center
Digital Democracy
Earle Baum Center of the Blind, Inc.
Eddington Advisory Services
Effective Nonprofits
Eleanor Smith & Associates
Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden
Exponent Partners
Facing History and Ourselves, Friends for Youth
San Francisco
Sacramento
San Francisco
Sacramento
Sacramento
Sacramento
Sacramento
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
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Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Oakland
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
California

Updated September 5, 2017
Page 4

Neighborhood Funders Group
Oakland

San Diego Advocates for Social Justice
San Diego

NEO Law Group
San Francisco

San Diego Public Library Foundation
San Diego

NGO Catalyst
Los Angeles

San Diego Youth Symphony & Conservatory
San Diego

Niswa Association, Inc.
Los Angeles

San Luis Obispo Symphony
Atascadero

NKR Consulting
Sunnyvale

Santa Monica Conservancy
Santa Monica

Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County
Los Angeles

Santa Ynez Valley Arts Assoc.
San Diego

Not Man Apart Physical Theatre
Los Angeles

SBCC Foundation
Santa Barbara

Notre Dame de Namur University
Belmont

Seva Foundation
Berkeley

Oakland Museum of California
Oakland

SF LGBT Center
San Francisco

OneJustice
San Francisco

Sierra HOPE
Angels Camp

Orange County United Way
Irvine

Sierra Repertory Theatre
Sonora

Pacific Community Ventures
San Francisco

Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange
Mountain View

Pacific Links Foundation
San Francisco

Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Mountain View

Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
Watsonville

Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits
San Jose

Pasadena Conservatory of Music
Pasadena

So CA Center for Nonprofit Management
Los Angeles

Paso Pacifico
Ventura

Solar Richmond
Richmond

Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation
Eureka

Somos Mayfair
San Jose

Patriots and Paws
Huntington Beach

South Asian Network
Artesia

Peninsula Family Service
San Mateo

Southern California Center for Nonprofit Management
Los Angeles

Philanthropy California (a joint initiative of Northern California Grantmakers, San Diego Grantmakers, and Southern California Grantmakers)
Los Angeles

St. Ignatius College Preparatory
San Anselmo

Point Foundation
Los Angeles

Swift Foundation
Los Osos

Pro Kids, The First Tee of San Diego
San Diego

Teen Success, Inc.
Milpitas

Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
San Diego

The 5 Gyres Institute
Los Angeles

Recovery Cafe San Jose
San Jose

The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
San Francisco

deDiscover Center
Venice

The Christensen Fund
San Francisco

Regenerate California Innovation
Clovis

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
San Francisco

Respite and Research for Alzheimer's Disease
San Jose

The Dibble Institute
Palo Alto

Richmond Community Foundation
Richmond

The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden
Palo Alto

Rochester Institute of Technology
Los Altos

The Fieldstone Foundation
Palo Alto

Sacramento LGBT Community Center
Sacramento

The Lawrence Welk Family Foundation
Los Angeles

Sadlon & Associates, Inc.
Glendale
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
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
UDPATED September 5, 2017
Page 6

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
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
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