The Honorable Stephanie Murphy  
1237 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Murphy:

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,

Florida Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

Allegany Franciscan Ministries Palm Harbor Sarasota
ALSO Youth, Inc. Orlando
Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center Palm Coast
Americans United for Separation of Church and State - Atlantic Coast Chapter Naples
Americans United for Separation of Church and State - Naples Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Florida Chapter Orlando
Avant Garde Accounting and Business Solutions, LLC New Port Richey
Beacon of Hope Pine Island, Inc. St. James City Clearwater
Bright Community Trust, Inc. Pembroke Pines Boynton Beach
Bristol Strategy Group Jacksonville
Cathedral Arts Project, Inc. CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers Fort Lauderdale
Children's Home Society of Florida Fort Lauderdale
Clearwater Free Clinic Orlando
Community Cancer Education, Inc. Clearwater
Cornerstone Housing, Inc. Cape Coral
Domestic Violence Shelter Jacksonville
Epilepsy Association of Central Florida, Inc. Fort Lauderdale
Fanny Landwrth Foundation Naples
Firehouse Cultural Center, Inc. Sarasota
First Bristol FCU Ponte Vedra
Florida Alliance of Community Development Corporations, Inc. Jacksonville
Florida Association of Nonprofits Fort Lauderdale
Florida Lions Conklin Centers for the Blind Daytona Beach
Florida Nonprofit Alliance Jacksonville
Florida Philanthropic Network St. Petersburg
Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg Naples
Freedom Payee Services, Inc. Orlando
Friends of the Carr Refuge Girl Scouts of Southeast Florida Indian Harbour Beach
Giboff Foundation Jupiter
Habitat for Humanity Lakeland
Haitelmex Foundation, Inc. Tampa
High Seas Academy Fort Lauderdale
Hispanic Services Council, Inc. Jacksonville
Ilse Newell Fund for the Performing Arts, Inc. - INConcert Tampa
Independence for the Blind of West Florida Apalachicola
Initiative Community International Pensacola
Jessie Ball duPont Fund Jacksonville
Jobsite Theater Sarasota
Josh Provides Epilepsy Assistance Foundation, Inc. St. Petersburg
KBT & Associates North Fort Myers
La Cacica Cimarrona Loiza
Education & Publishing, Inc. Englewood
Lighthouse Central Florida Orlando
Lighthouse SWFL, Inc.
Lydia B. Stokes Foundation  Gainesville  AdoptAClassroom.org
Mandarin Museum & Historical Society  Jacksonville  Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Mary Lee Walker, LLC  Orlando  Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Minority Help, Inc.  Pompano Beach  America Solidaria U.S.
MSL Grant Consulting  Boca Raton  American Alliance of Museums
Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida  Jacksonville  American Association of Anatomists
Not A Dry Eye Foundation  Miami  American Association of Physics Teachers
P.L. Dodge Foundation, Inc.  Miami  American Association of Teachers of German
Palm Beach Habilitation Center  Lake Worth  American Atheists
Pathfinder Outdoor Education  Bradenton  American Bladder Cancer Society
Phil-Com, LLC  Dade City  American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
Pioneer Florida Museum  Fort Myers  American Brass Chamber Music Association
Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida, Inc.  Miami  American Conference of Academic Deans
Rebuilding Together Miami-Dade  Clearwater  American Heart Association
RemediOcean, Inc.  St. Petersburg  American Historical Association
Risser Oil Corporation  Orlando  American Jewish Committee
S J Edwards Foundation  Orlando  American Medical Association Foundation
Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida  Orlando  American Physiological Society
South Palm Beach County Foundation  Boca Raton  American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.
The Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (C.A.R.E.)  Punta Gorda  Americans for the Arts
The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida  Jacksonville  Americans Promoting Study Abroad
The Glades Initiative, Inc.  Belle Glade  Americans United for Separation of Church and State
The Mustard Seed of Central Florida  Orlando  Amyloidosis Foundation
The Pride Center at Equality Park  Wilton Manors  Animal Legal Defense Fund
Unity  Miami  Annie E. Casey Foundation
Volunteers of America of Florida  Saint Petersburg  Anti-Defamation League
War on Poverty - Florida  Jacksonville  Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
Waste Not Want Not, Inc.  Saint Petersburg  Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
Winter Park Health Foundation  Winter Park  Association of American Colleges and Universities
Your Nonprofit Advisor, Inc.  St. Petersburg  Association of Art Museum Directors
YWCA of Greater Miami-Dade, Inc.  St. Petersburg  Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel

National Organizations
Abila
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.

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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  
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