

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Darin LaHood  
1424 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative LaHood:

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,

<b>Illinois</b>			
826CHI	Chicago	Community Behavioral	
Aging Care Connections	La Grange	Healthcare Association of	Springfield
AIDS Foundation of Chicago	Chicago	Illinois	Chicago
Allow Good	Chicago	CommunityHealth	Chicago
Alternatives, Inc.	Chicago	Conant Family Foundation	Chicago
American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons	Chicago	Concordia Place	Chicago
American Medical		Connections for the	
Association Foundation	Chicago	Homeless	Evanston
Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation	Northbrook	Creative Partners	Chicago
Association of Fundraising Professionals - Chicago IL		Cristo Rey St. Martin College	
Chapter	Chicago	Prep	Waukegan
Baker McGee Consulting	Chicago	Deborah's Place	Chicago
Ballet 5:8	Chicago	Divine Sparks	Chicago
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago	Chicago	Duke of Edinburgh's	
Bridge Communities	Glen Ellyn	International Award USA	
Bright Promise Fund for Urban Christian Education	Chicago	DuPage Federation on	
Career Resource Center	Lake Forest	Human Services Reform	Lombard
Center for Independent Futures	Evanston	Ecker Center for Mental	
Central States SER	Chicago	Health	Elgin
Chicago Botanic Garden	Glencoe	Embarc	Chicago
Chicago Community Loan Fund	Chicago	Erie Family Health Center	Chicago
Chicago Cultural Alliance	Chicago	Erie Neighborhood House	Chicago
Chicago Dramatists	Chicago	Evanston Community	
Chicago Global Health Alliance	Chicago	Foundation	Evanston
Chicago Humanities Festival	Chicago	Evanston Symphony	
Chicago Urban League	Chicago	Orchestra Association	Evanston
Child Care Center of Evanston	Evanston	Executive Service Corps of	
Children's Home Society of America	Chicago	Chicago	Chicago
Children's Neuroblastoma Cancer Foundation	Bloomingtondale	Facing Forward to End	
Children's Place Association	Chicago	Homelessness	Chicago
Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust	Elgin	Family Bridges	Oakbrook Terrace
College Bound Opportunities	Riverwoods	Family Focus	Chicago
		Family Service and Mental	
		Health Center of Cicero	Cicero
		Forefront	Chicago
		Friends of Downtown	Chicago
		Friends of the Chicago River	
		Gene Siskel Film Center	Chicago
		George M. Pullman	
		Educational Foundation	
		GrantResources, LLC	
		Greater Chicago Food	
		Depository	Chicago
		Growing Home, Inc.	Chicago

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**Illinois**

Habitat for Humanity Chicago	Chicago	MindsEye Radio	Belleville
Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County	Mahomet	Mission of Our Lady of Mercy, Inc.	Chicago
Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley		Mom2MomDG	
Harris Theater for Music and Dance	Chicago	Mutual Ground, Inc.	Aurora
High Concept Labs	Chicago	Naper Settlement	Naperville
Historic Chicago Bungalow Association	Chicago	National Louis University	Chicago
Holy Family Ministries	Lincolnshire	National Runaway Safeline	Chicago
Housing Institute	Bolingbrook	NextLevelNPO, LLC	Chicago
Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.)	Chicago	Nineteenth Century Charitable Association	
Hyde Park Art Center	Chicago	Nonprofit-Partners	Forest Park
Illinois Association of Museums	Springfield	Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence	Rockford
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Springfield	Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry	Oak Park
Illinois Collaboration on Youth	Chicago	Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation	Oak Park
Illinois Refugee and Immigrants Community Services	Skokie	Palatine Township Senior Citizens Council	Palatine
Illinois Tech Global Leaders Program	Chicago	PATH, Inc.	Bloomington
IL-WI Sertoma Regional Center for Communicative Disorders	Palos Hills	Pierce Family Foundation	
Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc.	Chicago	Pillars	LaGrange Park
JHR Resources	Chicago	Polk Bros. Foundation	Chicago
JOURNEYS   The Road Home	Palatine	Prevention Partnership, Inc.	Chicago
KCCDD	Galesburg	QC Arts	Rock Island
Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago	Glenview	Quarles & Brady LLP	
Land Conservancy of Will County	Frankfort	RAD Remedy	Chicago
Latino Policy Forum	Chicago	S. Wolf and Associates	Chicago
Leukemia Research Foundation		Schild Family Foundation	Wilmette
Levine Partners	Evanston	Shelter Care Ministries	Rockford
Life Quilt Foundation	Chicago	Sherrie Marchi Coaching	Palatine
Lincoln Park Zoo	Chicago	Springfield Area Arts Council	Springfield
Lumity	Chicago	St. Helena's Church	Burr Ridge
Lyons Township Mental Health Commission		Swan Isle Press	Chicago
McAlpine Consulting for Growth, LLC	Chicago	Temaner and Associates	Chicago
Mercy Home for Boys & Girls	Chicago	The Association of Consultants to Nonprofits	Chicago
		The Chicago Music Consortium	Bolingbrook
		The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust	Chicago
		The Friendship Center	Chicago
		The Harbour	Park Ridge
		The Land Conservancy of McHenry County	Woodstock
		The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation	Chicago
		The Seabury Foundation	Chicago
		United Way of Illinois	Chicago
		US Green Building Council	Hoffman Estates
		Us TOO International	Des Plaines

Victory House, Discipleship  
for Women  
VNA Foundation Chicago  
Volunteers of America of  
Illinois Chicago  
Waukegan to College Waukegan  
Webster-Cantrell Hall Decatur  
Westlawn Youth Network Chicago  
Wheat Ridge Ministries Oak Park  
Wishnick & Associates Chicago  
Writers Theatre Inc. Glencoe  
Youth and Opportunity  
United Evanston  
Youth Outlook Naperville  
Youth Outreach Services,  
Inc. Chicago  
YWCA - Canton Canton  
YWCA - Elgin Elgin  
YWCA - Kankakee Kankakee  
YWCA of the University of  
Illinois Champaign  
ZION Development  
Corporation Rockford

**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  
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

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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