

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer  
2230 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Luetkemeyer:

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>Missouri</b>			
After the Harvest	Kansas City	Harvesters - The Community	
AIA		Food Network	Kansas City
Allied Arts Council of St. Joseph, MO, Inc.	St. Joseph	Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City
Americans United for Separation of Church and State - St. Louis Chapter	St. Louis	HealthEd Connect	Lees Summit
ArtsTech	Kansas City	Heartland Foundation	
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City	Hillcrest Ministries, Inc.	Liberty
BikeWalkKC	Kansas City	James McNary and Joshua Logan Memorial	
Bilingual International Assistant Services	St. Louis	Scholarship	Saint Louis
Blue River Watershed Association	Kansas City	Kansas City Artists Coalition	Kansas City
BoysGrow		Kansas City Consensus	Kansas City
Bridging The Gap	Kansas City	Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium	
Camp Fire	Kansas City	Kansas City Symphony	Kansas City
Central Print	St. Louis	KCPT Public Television	
Christ Lutheran Church	Webster Groves	KMD Consulting	
Connections to Success		Leadership USA, Inc.	Kansas City
Contemporary Art Museum		Lee's Summit Educational Foundation	Lee's Summit
St. Louis	St. Louis	Legal Aid of Western Missouri	
Corey's Network, Inc.	Independence	MainCor	Kansas City
Creative Reaction Lab	St. Louis	Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis	
Cristo Rey Kansas City High School	Kansas City	MHAH	
Diastole Scholars' Center	Kansas City	Missouri Botanical Garden	St Louis
Dribin and Associates	St. Louis	Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	Jefferson City
EnCircle Technologies	Columbia	Missouri Family Health Council, Inc.	Ashland
Episcopal City Mission	St. Louis	NAMI Southwest Missouri Network for Strong Communities	Springfield
Episcopal Community Services, Heartland	Kansas City	Nonprofit Connect	St Louis
Francis Family Foundation	Kansas City	Nonprofit Leadership Alliance	Kansas City
G and V Organization	Northwood	Nonprofit Missouri	Jefferson City
Gladiator Consulting LLC	St. Louis	North Side Community School	
GPS Missions	Greenfield	Northeast Community Center	Kansas City
Green Works in Kansas City	Kansas City	Northland Shepherd's Center	Kansas City
Habitat for Humanity of Francois County, Inc.	Farmington		
Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County	St. Peters		
Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis	Saint Louis		

NorthWest Communities  
 Development Corporation Independence  
 Optimist Club of St. Charles  
 Missouri Saint Charles  
 Our Little Haven St. Louis  
 Platte County Senior Fund Kansas City  
 Platte Land Trust Kansas City  
 Presbyterian Children's  
 Homes & Services of MO St. Louis County  
 Royals Charities Kansas City  
 Safe Connections St. Louis  
 Saint Louis Effort for AIDS  
 SAVE, Inc. Saint Louis  
 Kansas City  
 Shia Islamic Education  
 Center Wildwood  
 Kansas City  
 Show Me KC Schools  
 Society for the Blind and  
 Visually Impaired St. Louis  
 Southeast Missouri Food  
 Bank Sikeston  
 Southtown Council Kansas City  
 Special Olympics Missouri Lee's Summit  
 St. Louis Area Foodbank Bridgeton  
 St. Teresa's Academy Kansas City  
 Synergy Group Wentzville  
 The Edgar Snow Memorial  
 Foundation Kansas City  
 The Hope Center KC Kansas City  
 The South Cabin Group LLC Wildwood  
 Turn the Page KC Kansas City  
 Unlimited Play St. Louis  
 Vasculitis Foundation Kansas City  
 VisionServe Alliance St. Louis  
 Wentzville School  
 Foundation  
 Women's Employment  
 Network Kansas City  
 Women's Foundation of  
 Greater St. Louis Saint Louis  
 Wright Care Dentistry

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  
 Champion 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

**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

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

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Missouri

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