

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Carol Shea-Porter
1530 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Shea-Porter:

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,

New Hampshire			
Academy of Applied Science	Contoocook	Grafton County Senior	
Affordable Housing		Citizens Council, Inc.	Lebanon
Education and		Great Bay Services	Dover
Development (AHEAD),		Hampstead Stage Company	
Inc.	Littleton	Holt Elwell Memorial	
AIDS Response Seacoast	Portsmouth	Foundation / Camp	
Alan Cantor Consulting LLC	Concord	Mowglis	Hebron
Americans United Upper		Jeanine & Company	
Valley VT-NH Chapter		Joan G. Lovering Health	
Appalachian Trail		Center	Greenland
Conservancy	Keene	Keene Day Care Center	
Arts Consulting Group	Bedford	Keene Housing Kids	
Bear-Paw Regional		Collaborative	Keene
Greenways	Deerfield	Laconia Historical and	
Bhutanese Community of		Museum Society	Laconia
New Hampshire		Lake Sunapee Protective	
Bike-Walk Alliance of NH	Salem	Association	Sunapee
Birch Corner Associates		Lakes Region Mental Health	
Carsey School of Public		Center, Inc. d/b/a	
Policy	Durham	Genesis Behavioral	
Castle Preservation Society	Moultonborough	Health	Laconia
Center for New Beginnings	Littleton	Lee Bruder Associates	Hancock
City Arts Nashua	Nashua	Loon Preservation	
Community Toolbox, Inc.	Portsmouth	Committee	
Concord Coalition to End		Marguerite's Place, Inc.	Nashua
Homelessness	Concord	Marion Gerrish Community	
Concord Community Music		Center	Derry
School	Concord	Monadnock Conservancy	Keene
Cornerstone Visiting Nurse		Monadnock Humane Society	Swanzey
Agency		Monadnock Worksource	Peterborough
Cornerstone VNA	Rochester	Nashua Soup Kitchen &	
Cross Roads House, Inc.	Portsmouth	Shelter, Inc.	Nashua
CVNA	Barrington	New Beginnings Without	
Dover Adult Learning Center		Violence and Abuse	Laconia
Eastern Lakes Region		New England Pet Partners,	
Housing Coalition	Center Ossipee	Inc.	
ELRHC	Wolfboro	New Hampshire Art	
First Church in Jaffrey	Jaffrey	Association	Durham
Franklin Opera House	Franklin	New Hampshire Boat	
Franklin VNA & Hospice	Franklin	Museum	Wolfboro Falls
Freedom Historical Society	Freedom	New Hampshire Community	
Friends of Tuckerman		Action Association	Keene
Ravine	Conway	New Hampshire Humanities	

New Hampshire School Administrators Association	Concord	American Association of Teachers of German
New Hampshire Theatre Project	Portsmouth	American Atheists
NH Businesses for Social Responsibility	Concord	American Bladder Cancer Society
NH Center for Nonprofits	Concord	American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
NH Citizens for Criminal Justice Reform	Concord	American Brass Chamber Music Association
NH Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	Concord	American Conference of Academic Deans
NH Community Loan Fund	Concord	American Heart Association
NH Preservation Alliance	Concord	American Historical Association
NHSCOT	Concord	American Jewish Committee
Raymond Coalition for Youth, Inc.	Raymond	American Medical Association Foundation
SEH Studios	Londonderry	American Physiological Society
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests	Concord	American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.
Southeastern NH Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services	Dover	American Red Cross
Squam Lakes Natural Science Center	Holderness	Americans for the Arts
St. Joseph Community Services, Inc.	Merrimack	Americans Promoting Study Abroad
The Birchtree Center	Newington	Americans United for Separation of Church and State
The Community Kitchen, Inc.	Keene	Amyloidosis Foundation
The Fells Historic Estate and Gardens	Newbury	Animal Legal Defense Fund
Touchstone Farm	Temple	Annie E. Casey Foundation
Trower & Trower, Inc.	Weare	Anti-Defamation League
Upper Valley Land Trust	Hanover	Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
Visiting Nurse Home Care and Hospice of Carroll County	North Conway	Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
White Birch Center	Henniker	Association of American Colleges and Universities
World Affairs Council of New Hampshire	Manchester	Association of Art Museum Directors

National Organizations

Abila	Camp Fire
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.	Campion Foundation
AdoptAClassroom.org	Catholic Charities USA
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities	Catholic Mobilizing Network
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation	Center for Health, Environment & Justice
America Solidaria U.S.	Center for Inquiry
American Alliance of Museums	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
American Association of Anatomists	Citizen Schools
American Association of Physics Teachers	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