The Honorable Steve E. Stivers  
1022 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stivers:

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,

Ohio
Action for Children 
Affecting Community Transformation d/b/a Oasis House 
Aikey Foundation, Inc. 
Akron Community Foundation 
Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions 
Bethany House Services 
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Shelby & Darke County 
Bryan Area Foundation 
Business for Peace 
Community Development Foundation (B4P CODEFOUND) 
Cancer Patient Services 
Circle of Peace International 
City Year Columbus 
Clark County Historical Society 
Cleveland Zoological Society 
Cogswell Hall, Inc. 
Columbus School for Girls 
Community Foundation of Lorain County 
Community Kitchen 
Corporation for Findlay Market 
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development 
Crime Victim Services 
Daybreak 
Dayton Foundation 
Disability Foundation, Inc. 
Dobama Theatre 
Dublin Arts Council 
E&L Company 
Early Childhood Resource Center 
Easter Seals Serving Greater Cincinnati 
Edheads 
Equitas Health 
Far West Center 
Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center 
Food For Thought 
Franciscan Earth Literacy Center 
Friends of the Cultural Arts Center 
Glacicy Theatre Collective 
Goodwill Columbus 
Green Hills Community 
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Cincinnati 
Habitat for Humanity, Mid-Ohio 
Hannah's Treasure Chest 
Harmony Project 
Havas, Inc. 
Homeport 
House of New Hope 
Housing Research & Advocacy Center 
Humility of Mary Housing 
Jarvis Gibson Foundation 
Kendal at Granville 
Lake Erie Swimming 
LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland 
LifeSpan 
Mobile Meals of Toledo, Inc. 
Morino Ventures, LLC 
Multifaith Campus Alliance of the Miami Valley 
Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland 
Newark-Granville Symphony Orchestra 
Non Profit Evolution 
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies 
Ohio Association of Foodbanks 
Edheads 
Columbus 
Dayton 
Wellington 
Akron 
Yellow Springs 
Cincinnati 
Sidney 
Bryan 
Blacklick 
Findlay 
Marietta 
Columbus 
Springfield 
Cleveland 
Cleveland 
Columbus 
Elyria 
Columbus 
Cincinnati 
Lima 
Dayton 
Dayton 
Dayton 
Cleveland Heights 
Dublin 
Youngstown 
Canton 
Cincinnati 
Hilliard 
Columbus 
Westlake 
Chagrin Falls 
Toledo 
Tiffin 
Columbus 
West Liberty 
Cincinnati 
Columbus 
Centerville 
Columbus 
Athens 
Columbus 
Saint Louisville 
Cleveland 
Granville 
Hamilton 
Toledo 
Rocky River 
Dayton 
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Columbus
**Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship**  
Ohio  
**UDPATED September 5, 2017**  
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United Way of Williams County | Bryan |
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio | Columbus |
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West Side Catholic Center | Cleveland |
WomenSafe | Chardon |
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YWCA Dayton | |
YWCA Greater Cincinnati | Cincinnati |
YWCA of Hamilton, OH | West Chester |
YWCA Warren | Warren |

**National Organizations**

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Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel  
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Lumina Foundation  
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NEO Law Group
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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
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Secular Coalition for America
Senior Executives Association
Seva Foundation
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The Arc of the United States
The Aspen Institute
The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.
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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
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Union for Reform Judaism
United Philanthropy Forum
United Way Worldwide
University Professional & Continuing Education Association
US Lacrosse
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Volunteers in Medicine
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Words Without Borders
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Youth Services America
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