

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Jim D. Jordan  
2056 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Jordan:

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

Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations - OANO Columbus  
 Ohio CDC Association Columbus  
 Ohio Domestic Violence Network Columbus  
 Ohio Environmental Council Columbus  
 Ohio League For Nursing North Olmsted  
 Ohio Valley Recovery Incorporated Bridgeport  
 Perry County Soccer League Crooksville  
 Philanthropy Ohio Columbus  
 Preferred Properties, Inc. Toledo  
 Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate  
 Sears-Swetland Family Foundation Bratenahl  
 Seeds of Hope Tiffin  
 Sisters of St. Francis Tiffin  
 Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth Delphos  
 St. Francis Spirituality Center Tiffin  
 Stonewall Columbus Columbus  
 StriveTogether Cincinnati  
 Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank Cincinnati  
 The Central Ohio Symphony Delaware  
 The Community Foundation for Crawford County Bucyrus  
 The Dakota Center Dayton  
 The Foodbank, Inc. Dayton  
 The Gathering Place Beachwood  
 The George Gund Foundation Cleveland  
 The Problem Gambling Network of Ohio Columbus  
 The Sindisa Fund Hillsboro  
 The UpTown Association, Inc. Toledo  
 Toledo Ballet Toledo  
 Toledo Community Foundation Toledo  
 Transitions, Inc. Zanesville  
 United Disability Services Akron  
 United Way of Gallia County Gallipolis  
 United Way of Greater Cleveland Cleveland  
 United Way of Medina County Medina  
 United Way of Summit County Akron

United Way of Williams County Bryan  
 Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio Columbus  
 VSA Ohio Columbus  
 West Side Catholic Center Cleveland  
 WomenSafe Chardon  
 YWCA Alliance Alliance  
 YWCA Dayton  
 YWCA Greater Cincinnati Cincinnati  
 YWCA of Hamilton, OH West Chester  
 YWCA Warren Warren

**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

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Ohio

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