The Honorable Pete A. DeFazio  
2134 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  

Dear Representative DeFazio:  

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,

Oregon

Alano Club of Portland Portland
Alisa Blum & Associates Portland
Anne E. Denecke, PC Portland
Birthwiny College of Midwifery Portland
Breast Friends, Oregon Portland
Cannabis Certification Council Portland
CASA of Oregon Sherwood
Cascades Raptor Center Eugene
Cat Adoption Team Sherwood
Children’s Advocacy Center of Lincoln County Newport
Chinquapin Center for the Arts Grants Pass
Coalition Advocating for Animals Salem
Coastal Celtic Society Coos Bay
Cogeo Portland
College Dreams Grants Pass
Columbia Pacific Food Bank Portland
Community Housing Fund Grants Pass
Community Warehouse Eugene
Cornerstone Community Housing Coos Bay
Cottage Theatre Cottage Grove
Creswell at Home, Inc. Creswell
CTThompson Consulting Eugene
Dana L Brown Consulting Portland
Delgani String Quartet Eugene
Donate Life Northwest Portland
Eastco Diversified Services, Inc. Portland
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Gresham
F.I.N.F.I.D. International Foundation Portland
Facilitation & Process, LLC Portland
Four Rivers Health Care Portland
Friendly House Ontario
Friends Of South Slough Portland
Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge Sherwood
Friends of the West Slope Library Portland
Fritz Consulting Bend
Give Voice Portland
Go To Help, LLC Portland
Grantmakers of Oregon and Southwest Washington Portland
Grants Pass Museum of Art Grants Pass
Grounded Solutions Network Portland
Health Care for All-Oregon Bend
Heart of Oregon Corps Troutdale
In This Together
Itching to Help! NPC
Jayne Cravens, Consultant Forest Grove
Juliette’s House Child Abuse Intervention Center McMinnville
Kathy Kniep Consulting Portland
La Pine Community Kitchen La Pine
Lake County Resources Initiative Lakeview
Laudato si’ USA Portland
Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School Portland
Lora & Martin Kelley Family Foundation Portland
MacKenzie Community Track & Field Vida
Main Street Mosier Mosier
Meals on Wheels People Portland
Meyer Memorial Trust Portland
Molalla Warming Center Molalla
Mosaic Consulting Portland
Mother Teresa Home d/b/a Magdalene Home Medford
Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp Portland
Mylen Shenker, CPA Portland
National Indian Child Welfare Association Portland
NE Coalition of Neighborhoods Portland
Newberg Area Habitat for Humanity Newberg
Nonprofit Association of Oregon Portland
Northwest College of the Liberal Arts  Portland
Northwest Pilot Project, Inc.  Portland
ONABEN  Portland
Oregon Food Bank  Portland
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club  Portland
Oregon Tilth  Wilsonville
OregonASK  Eugene
ORI Community and Evaluation Services  Portland
People for Parks Oregon  Portland
Phoenix Finance  Gresham
Phoenix Rising Transitions  Portland
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  Portland
Raziah Roushan, Inc.  Beaverton
Renewable Northwest  Portland
Returning Veterans Project  Portland
Rogue Valley Chorale Association  Rogue River
Rogue Valley Youth Choruses  Portland
ROSE Community Development  Salem
Shangri La Corporation  Silverton
Silverton Together, Inc.  Silverton
Society for Syncopated Drumming  Portland
Sojourner Education Foundation  Portland
Southern Oregon Child and Family Council  Central Point
SPOON  Portland
St. Vincent de Paul Society Tanker 61 Memorial  Portland
The Ford Family Foundation  Portland
The Learning Commons  Roseburg
The Museum At Warm Springs  Portland
The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center  Portland
THSC  Milwaukie
Tom McCall Legacy Project Transition Projects  Portland
United Way of Columbia County  Rainier
Vernonia Hands on Art Center  Vernonia
Wellsprings Friends School  Eugene
Western Arts Alliance  Portland

Willamette Resources and Educational Network  Eugene
Write Around Portland  Portland
Yamhill CDC d/b/a Community Home  McMinnville
Yamhill Community Action Partnership Food Bank  McMinnville

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
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
Oregon

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 Orchras
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
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

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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