The Honorable Lou J. Barletta
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Barletta:

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,

Pennsylvania

A Woman's Concern Lancaster
ACLAMO Family Centers Norristown
Acquired Brain Injury Lansdale
Network of Pennsylvania Philadelphia
AFP-Greater Philadelphia Pittsburgh
Chapter Philadelphia
Allegheny County Library Pittsburgh
Association Philadelphia
American Insight Pittsburgh
Army Heritage Center Pittsburgh
Foundation
Auberle Carlisle
Aurora Philanthropic McKeesport
Consulting, LLC King of Prussia
Balanced Heart Healing Mars
Center, Inc. Harrisburg
Beacon Clinic for Health and Reading
Hope Reading
Berks Community Action Reading
Program, Inc.
Berks County Community Reading
Foundation
Beyond Celiac Allentown
Bower & Co. West Reading
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Pittsburgh
Community Center Pittsburgh
Breast Cancer Support Pittsburgh
Services of Berks Pittsburgh
Brother's Brother Pittsburgh
Foundation
Bucks County Housing Pittsburgh
Group
Butler YWCA Butler
Caitlin's Smiles Butler
Calvary United Methodist Windber
Church of Windber PA
Camp Koala Kingston
Casita Copan Pittsburgh
Center for Literacy, World Philadelphia
Affairs Council
Central Pennsylvania Food Philadelphia
Bank
Centre County Women's State College
Resource Center

Centre Wildlife Care Lemont
Chester County Historical West Chester
Society
Christian Youth Fellowship, Pittsburgh
Inc.
Civic Square Pittsburgh
Colcom Foundation Pittsburgh
COMON Education Pittsburgh
Foundation
Commonwealth Youth Philadelphia
Choirs
Communities In Schools of
the Lehigh Valley Breinigsville
Coro Pittsburgh Pittsburgh
Cotlar and Cotlar Doylestown
Dementia Society, Inc.
DePaul School for Hearing Doylestown
and Speech
Development Consultants Pittsburgh
Dignity Housing Philadelphia
Diversity in Action
Donald and Sylvia Robinson
Family Foundation Pittsburgh
Don't Stop Dreamin' Butler
Downtown Lewistown, Inc. Lewistown
Eloise Howard & Associates Scranton
Employment Opportunity Philadelphia
and Training Center of
Northeast Pennsylvania
Energize, Inc. Philadelphia
Family Promise of Lyco Williamsport
County
Family Service Association Wilkes-Barre
of Northeastern
Pennsylvania
Family Service of Chester
County
Family Services of Western West Chester
PA
Fishes & Loaves Pittsburgh
Cooperative Ministries Pittsburgh
Frankford Community Philadelphia
Development Corporation
Free Library of Philadelphia Philadelphia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updated September 5, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>Friends Fiduciary Corporation</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>Friends of SummerSounds Genesee Area Library</td>
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<td>Georgia E. Gregory Interdenominational School of Music</td>
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<td>Glen Foerd Conservation Corporation</td>
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<td>Global Connections</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>Global Links</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>Erie</td>
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<td>Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank</td>
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<td>Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County</td>
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<td>Moon Township</td>
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<td>Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>Impact100 Philadelphia InfoRich Group, Inc.</td>
<td>Haverford</td>
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<td>Inglis</td>
<td>Drexel Hill</td>
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<td>Inter-Mission</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>International Performing Arts for Youth</td>
<td>Narberth</td>
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<td>Philadelphia</td>
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<td>Glenside</td>
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<td>Junior League of the Lehigh Valley</td>
<td>Harrisburg</td>
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<td>Kelly Anne Dolan Memorial Fund</td>
<td>Fort Washington</td>
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<td>KenCrest</td>
<td>Blue Bell</td>
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<td>Kennett Area Senior Center</td>
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<td>Mary &amp; Alexander Laughlin Children's Center</td>
<td>Sewickley</td>
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<td>Melanie Dante, Consultant</td>
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<td>Mom's House, Inc. of Greater Philadelphia</td>
<td>Phoenixville</td>
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<td>Montgomery Early Learning Centers</td>
<td>Narberth</td>
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<td>Moravian Open Door, Inc.</td>
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<td>National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors</td>
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<td>National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation</td>
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<td>Nazareth Housing Services</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>New Castle Community Y</td>
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<td>Newport Public Library</td>
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<td>Northland Public Library Foundation</td>
<td>Wexford</td>
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<td>Outreach Teen &amp; Family Services</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>PA Campus Compact</td>
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<td>PA Mental Health</td>
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<td>Consumers' Association Partnership for Better Health</td>
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<td>Harrisburg PA</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

Updated September 5, 2017
Page 4

Pearl S. Buck International
Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
Pennsylvania Lumber Museum Associates
Philly Fellows
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
Phoenixville Area Community Services
Pinebrook Family Answers
Pleasantville United Church of Christ
Plum Senior Community Center
Praise Consulting
Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg
Renew Theaters, Inc.
Richard Erstad Consulting
Robert Johnson Smith Family Life Center
Roots Tribe Yoga
Rosenlund Family Foundation
Samara: Nurture and Education for Parents
Schuylkill Women in Crisis
SeeChange Consulting
Sexual Assault Resource & Counseling Center (SARCC)
Sisters of Mercy
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province
SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice
Starfinder Foundation
Strategy Solutions
Tabor Community Services
TeamChildren
The Alfred & Mary Douty Foundation
The Bodhana Group
The Burd Group
The Children's Museum
The Conocheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage
The Dietrich W. Botstiber Foundation
Perkasie
Harrisburg
State College
Ulysses
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh
Phoenixville
Allentown
Chalfont
Plum
Langhorne
Carlisle
Doylestown
Ardmore
Philadelphia
Philadelphia
Philadelphia
Elizabethtown
Pottsville
Philadelphia
Lebanon
Pittsburgh
Chambersburg
Philadelphia
Erie
Erie
Philadelphia
York City
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Chambersburg
Philadelphia
Erie
Erie
Philadelphia
York City
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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
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
Pennsylvania

Updated September 5, 2017

Page 6

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