The Honorable Mike F. Doyle Jr.
239 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Doyle:

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 Philadelphia
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 Reading
Bower & Co.
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Reading
Community Center
Breast Cancer Support Scranton
Services of Berks
Brother’s Brother Energy Philadelphia
Foundation
Bucks County Housing Pittsburgh
Group
Butler YWCA Pittsburgh
Caitlin’s Smiles Pittsburgh
Calvary United Methodist Pittsburgh
Church of Windber PA
Camp Koala Pittsburgh
Casita Copan Pittsburgh
Center for Literacy, World Pittsburgh
Affairs Council
Central Pennsylvania Food Philadelphia
Bank
Centre County Women’s Philadelphia
Resource Center
State College

Centre Wildlife Care Lemont
Chester County Historical West Chester
Society
Christian Youth Fellowship, Pittsburgh
Inc.
Civic Square Pittsburgh
Colcom Foundation Pittsburgh
COMMON Education Pittsburgh
Foundation
Commonwealth Youth Philadelphia
Choirs
Communities In Schools of Philadelphia
the Lehigh Valley
Coro Pittsburgh Pittsburgh
Cotlar and Cotlar Doylestown
Dementia Society, Inc. Doylestown
DePaul School for Hearing Pittsburgh
and Speech
Development Consultants Philadelphia
Dignity Housing
Diversity in Action
Donald and Sylvia Robinson Pittsburgh
Family Foundation
Don't Stop Dreamin’ Butler
Downtown Lewistown, Inc. Lewistown
Elayan Howard & Associates Scranton
Employment Opportunity
and Training Center of Scranton
Northeast Pennsylvania
Energize, Inc. Philadelphia
Family Promise of Lyco Williamsport
County
Family Service Association Wilkes-Barre
of Northeastern
Pennsylvania
Family Service of Chester West Chester
County
Family Services of Western Pittsburgh
PA
Fishes & Loaves Pittsburgh
Cooperative Ministries
Frankford Community Pittsburgh
Development Corporation
Free Library of Philadelphia Philadelphia
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State College
Pennsylvania Lumber Museum Associates
Ulysses
Philly Fellows
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Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
Pittsburgh
Phoenizville Area Community Services
Phoenixville
Pinebrook Family Answers
Allentown
Pleasantville United Church of Christ
Chalfont
Plum Senior Community Center
Plum
Praise Consulting
Langhorne
Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg
Carlisle
Renew Theaters, Inc.
Doylestown
Richard Erstad Consulting
Ardmore
Robert Johnson Smith Family Life Center
Philadelphia
Roots Tribe Yoga
Philadelphia
Rosenlund Family Foundation
Samara: Nurture and Education for Parents
Philadelphia
Schuylkill Women in Crisis
Elizabethtown
SeeChange Consulting
Pottsville
Sexual Assault Resource & Counseling Center (SARCC)
Philadelphia
Sisters of Mercy
Lebanon
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, American Province
Pittsburgh
SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice
Philadelphia
Starfinder Foundation
Chambersburg
Strategy Solutions
Philadelphia
Tabor Community Services
Erie
TeamChildren
Lancaster
The Alfred & Mary Douty Foundation
Philadelphia
The Bodhana Group
Ephrata
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Bloomsburg
The Children's Museum
Mercersburg
The Conococheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage
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Bryn Mawr
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Wilkes-Barre
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Philadelphia
Women for Sobriety
Wayne
Women's Resource Center
Philadelphia
Women's Way
York
York Day Nursery
York
YWCA Bradford
Bradford
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh
YWCA Northcentral PA
Williamsport
YWCA Tri-County Area
Pottstown
YWCA York
York

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
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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.
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Harbor Compliance
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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
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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