The Honorable John Cornyn III  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

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,

Texas

Abbe & Associates: Fundraising and Nonprofit Consultants Arlington
Abell Photography Austin
All Blind Children of Texas Abilene
Amarillo Habitat for Humanity Austin
American Heart Association Houston
Americans United for Separation of Church & State - San Antonio, TX Chapter San Antonio
Americans United for Separation of Church and State - Houston chapter Houston
Andrew Delaney Foundation Austin
Appamada Midland
Arts Council of Midland Associated Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Texas, Inc. Buda
Associated Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Texas, Inc. Austin
Austin Habitat for Humanity Bay Area Turning Point, Inc. Austin
BEST of Texas Robotics Austin
Bexar County Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc. San Antonio
Big Medium Austin
Brazos Bend Guardianship Services Rosenberg
Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity Bryan
Caritas of Austin Austin
Chavisjah Supportive Services Missouri City
Children Helpers Foundations Cape Coast
Christian Women's Job Corps of El Paso Austin
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities Austin
Community Integrated Employment Fort Worth
Congregation Agudas Achim Dallas
Cultivating Leaders Achieving Scholastic Success Dallas
Dallas Area Parkinsonism Society Dallas
Dallas Parks Foundation Dallas
disABILITYsa El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission San Antonio
Equity for Women in the Church, Inc. Dallas
Fellowship Southwest for the Children, Inc., d/b/a Arts & Entertainment 4 DFW Youths Coppell
Fort Bend Habitat for Humanity Plano
Fort Hood Area Habitat for Humanity Stafford
Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity, Inc. Killeen
Foundation Communities Fort Worth
Girl Scouts of Central Texas Austin
Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas Austin
Granny's Place Ministries Dallas
GrantBook Duncanville
Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pet Galveston
Gulf Coast Big Brothers & Big Sisters, Inc. Abilene
Habitat for Humanity Abilene, Inc. Denton
Habitat for Humanity Denton County Sherman
Habitat for Humanity of Grayson County Garland
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Garland
Habitat for Humanity of San Angelo San Angelo
Habitat for Humanity of Smith County Tyler
Habitat for Humanity of Williamson County, Texas, Inc. Georgetown
Hardin-Simmons University Abilene
Hero Dogs, Inc. Grapevine
Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas San Antonio
House of Hope, Inc. Glenn Heights
Houston Children Give Back Houston
Houston Habitat for Humanity Austin
IT'S TIME TEXAS Austin
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

Join Us For Justice, the El Paso Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Launch Pad Job Club

LevelUp Institute

Lions Club International

Literacy Advance of Houston

Live Theatre League of Tarrant County

Longview Habitat for Humanity, Inc.

Madeleine Crouch & Co., Inc.

Malone Law Firm

Midland Habitat for Humanity

Mission Granbury Inc.

North Collin County Habitat for Humanity

One Voice Central Texas

Oralia Lichtenberger

Pasadena Habitat for Humanity

Pastors for Texas Children

Peace of Christ Church

REACH

Resource Center

Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute

SA Leadership Excel Academy

San Antonio Lighthouse For The Blind

Sewa International

Sexual Assault Resource Center

Social Velocity

South Main Baptist Church, Houston

South Texas Literacy Coalition

Standish Foundation for Child & Family Centered Healthcare

State of Texas Alliance for Recycling

Swan Songs

Taps ‘n Tunes Productions, Inc.

Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations

Texas Baptists Committed

Texas One Voice d/b/a One Voice Texas

Texoma Health Foundation

The Arc of Fort Bend County

The Awty International School

The Baby Stewart Foundation

The Fallen Linemen Organization

The Gleaning Network of Texas d/b/a GROW North Texas

The Montrose Center

Thousands Watching

Trinity Center

United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County

United Way of Greater Houston

United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County

United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County

Vision Weavers Consulting, LLC

Vistage Group 3627

Volunteers of America Texas

Waco Habitat for Humanity

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Austin

Young Women's Christian Association of San Antonio, TX

YWCA of Lubbock

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
Clean Slate Now
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
Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UDPATED September 5, 2017

Page 5

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