

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Joaquin Castro  
1221 Longworth House Office Building  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Castro:

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

Join Us For Justice, the El Paso Chapter of Americans United	El Paso	The Awty International School	Houston
Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.	College Station	The Baby Stewart Foundation	
Latinitas	Austin and El Paso	The Fallen Linemen Organization	
Launch Pad Job Club	Austin	The Gleaning Network of Texas d/b/a GROW North Texas	Dallas
LevelUp Institute	Austin	The Montrose Center	Houston
Lions Club International	Bellmead	Thousands Watching	Houston
Literacy Advance of Houston		Trinity Center	Austin
Live Theatre League of Tarrant County	Fort Worth	United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County	Baytown
Longview Habitat for Humanity, Inc.	Longview	United Way of Greater Houston	Houston
Madeleine Crouch & Co., Inc.	Dallas	United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County	Port Arthur
Malone Law Firm	Arlington	United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County	San Antonio
Midland Habitat for Humanity	Midland	Vision Weavers Consulting, LLC	Humble
Mission Granbury Inc.		Vistage Group 3627	Houston
North Collin County Habitat for Humanity	McKinney	Volunteers of America Texas	Arlington
One Voice Central Texas	Austin	Waco Habitat for Humanity	Waco
Oralia Lichtenberger	Laredo	Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Austin	Austin
Pasadena Habitat for Humanity	Pasadena	Young Women's Christian Association of San Antonio, TX	San Antonio
Pastors for Texas Children	Fort Worth	YWCA of Lubbock	Lubbock
Peace of Christ Church	Round Rock		
REACH	Dallas		
Resource Center	Dallas		
Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute	Brownsville		
SA Leadership Excel Academy	San Antonio		
San Antonio Lighthouse For The Blind	San Antonio		
Sewa International	Houston		
Sexual Assault Resource Center	Bryan		
Social Velocity	Austin		
South Main Baptist Church, Houston	Houston		
South Texas Literacy Coalition	Edinburg		
Standish Foundation for Child & Family Centered Healthcare	Austin		
State of Texas Alliance for Recycling			
Swan Songs	Austin		
Taps 'n Tunes Productions, Inc.	Hurst		
Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations	Houston		
Texas Baptists Committed	Allen		
Texas One Voice d/b/a One Voice Texas	Houston		
Texoma Health Foundation	Denison		
The Arc of Fort Bend County	Sugar Land		

**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

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Texas

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