

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

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,

Washington			
501 Commons	Seattle	Children's Home Society of Washington	
7028 Life Enhancement Charitable Trust	Seattle	CIS	
Account for Your Health	Everett	Clallam Mosaic	Port Angeles
ACS - Washington	Federal Way	COMIA Foundation	Cheney
Advancement Consulting	Tacoma	Committee for Children	
Allison Carney Consulting	Seattle	Community Action Center	Pullman
Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse	Pullman	Congregations for the Homeless	Bellevue
Amigas De Corazon	Spokane	Conservation Northwest	Seattle
Anderson Foundation for the Arts	Walla Walla	Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition	Vancouver
Art with Heart	Seattle	Coral	
Arts Corps	Seattle	Crainix Brain Health Institute	
Asian Counseling & Referral Service	Seattle	Danza Classica Ballet Foundation	Walla Walla
Backbone Campaign	Vashon	Dispute Resolution Center of Kitsap County	Silverdale
Bainbridge Chorale	Bainbridge Island	ECHHO (Ecumenical Christian Helping Hands Organization)	Port Townsend
Bellingham Girls Rock Camp	Bellingham	Environmental Science Center	Burien
Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue	Seattle	Faith Action Network	Seattle
Birch Consulting	Vancouver	Faith In Action West Sound	Belfair
Blue Mountain Humane Society	Walla Walla	First Taiwanese Presbyterian Church	Seattle
Blueprints for Learning	Spokane	Flight Club Foundation	Auburn
Boys & Girls Clubs of King County	Seattle	Forest and Sequoia Foundations	Tacoma
Braided River	Seattle	Foundation for Healthy Generations	Seattle
Brigid Collins Family Support Center	Bellingham	Foundation for International Understanding Through Students	Seattle
Bullitt Foundation	Seattle	Foundation for Sex Positive Culture	Seattle
Camp Fire Samish and Camp Kirby	Bellingham	Fountain of Life Foundation	Milton
Campion Foundation	Seattle	Freedom Project	Seattle
CascadiaNow!	Seattle	Friends of Lopez Island Pool	Lopez Island
Cedarmere Foundation	Seattle	Friends of the Carpenter	Vancouver
Center for Justice	Spokane	Full Circle Equine Rehabilitation Center	Colbert
Centerforce		Fund Momentum, LLC	Seattle
Centerpoint Institute	Bellevue	Furry Friends	Vancouver
Charitable Humans	Bothell	Genetic Support Foundation	Olympia
Chehalis River Basin Land Trust			
Child Care Aware of WA	Tacoma		
Child Care Resources	Seattle		

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Girl Scouts of Western Washington	Seattle	Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity	Ellensburg
Grace Baptist Church	University Place	KMRE Community Radio	Bellingham
Granite Falls Community Coalition Food Bank	Granite Falls	Knitting Humanity Together	Kent
Greater Gig Harbor Foundation	Gig Harbor	Kulshan Community Land Trust	Bellingham
Greater Lynchburg Community Trust	Lynchburg	Laura Pierce Consulting	Seattle
Gwaan Hai, LLC	Bellevue	League of Women Voters of Washington	Seattle
Habitat for Humanity - Colville Valley Partners	Colville	Leahy Consulting	Sammamish
Habitat for Humanity - Spokane	Spokane	Legal Voice	Seattle
Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County		Lewis County Literacy Council	Centralia
Habitat for Humanity of Washington State	Tacoma	LKA Fundraising & Communication	Seattle
Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County	Seattle	Lopez Island Historical Society, Freedom From Religion Foundation,	
Health and Hope Medical Outreach	Centralia	American Humanists	Lopez Island
Healthy Youth Alliance		Mangrove Action Project	Seattle
Heartlinks Hospice & Palliative Care Helpline	Sunnyside	Mannix Canby Foundation	Seattle
Homage Senior Services	Walla Walla	Many Lights Foundation	Newcastle
HomeFront Therapies	Everett	Martial Arts in the Public Interest	Seattle
Homes First	Olympia	Mary's Place Seattle	Seattle
Homeward Pet Adoption Center		Master Gardener Foundation of Benton Franklin County	Richland
HopeSparks Family Services	Tacoma	Master Gardener Foundation of Clark County	Ridgefield
HopeWorks Social Enterprises	Everett	Meade B Thayer LLC	Seattle
Inland Northwest Nonprofit Consulting		Michael's Caterpillar	Seattle
Intermountain Impact Investments	Walla Walla	Motley Zoo Animal Rescue	Redmond
International Community Health Services	Ken	Mount Vernon Downtown Association	Mount Vernon
Invest in Youth	Seattle	MSplus Foundation	Olympia
Island County Historical Society	Coupeville	NAMI Washington	Seattle
Island Hospital Foundation	Anacortes	Native Arts and Cultures Foundation	
Job Carr Cabin Museum	Tacoma	Nature 4 All	Maple Valley
Josephine Caring Community in Stanwood WA	Mount Vernon	Nexus Youth and Families Nonprofit & Philanthropy Resource Center	Auburn
Key Peninsula Community Services		Nonprofit Network SWWA	Redmond
Kirkpatrick Family Foundation	Seattle	Nonprofit Performance Partners, LLC	Vancouver
		North Cascades Conservation Council	Redmond
		North Helpline	Seattle
		Northwest Association for Biomedical Research	Seattle

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Northwest Children's Fund NPO	Kirkland Seattle	Seattle Foundation Seattle Works	Seattle Seattle
NW Children's Fund	Seattle	Seattle/King Co. Coalition	
NW Financial Fitness Training	Kelso	on Homelessness Shelter Bay Chorus	Seattle La Conner
Olympic View Community Foundation	Sequim	Sherwood Trust Short Run Seattle	Walla Walla Seattle
One Equal Heart Foundation	Seattle	Sidney Museum and Arts Association	
Open Arms Perinatal Services	Seattle	Simkin Center at Bastyr University	
Orcas Island Community Foundation	Eastsound	Skagit Community Foundation	Mount Vernon
Orting Food Bank	Orting	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group	Mount Vernon
Our Literacy Council of Lewis County	Centralia	Skagit Habitat for Humanity	Mount Vernon
Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program	Seattle	Sno-Valley Senior Center	Carnation
Parentworks.com		Society of St. Vincent de Paul	University Place
Pateros Brewster Community Resource Center	Pateros	Sound Generations	Seattle
Patuloy	Federal Way	Sound Learning	Olympia
Peoria Home	Everett	Sound Nonprofits	Tacoma
Phila Engaged Giving	Seattle	Sound Salmon Solutions	Lake Stevens
Philanthropy Northwest	Seattle	Southwest Spokane County Historical Society	Cheney
Phoenix Conservancy	Pullman	Southwest Youth and Family Services	Seattle
Pierce County Labor Community Services Agency	Tacoma	Spokane Area Jewish Family Services	Spokane
Pomegranate Center		Spokane Hearing Oral Program of Excellence (HOPE)	Spokane
Powerful Voices		Spokane Sports Commission	Spokane
Pride Foundation	Seattle	Stage West Community Theatre	Ocean Shores
Prime Time, Inc.	Yakima	Summit Assistance Dogs	
Progressive Animal Welfare Society	Lynnwood	Support Services for the Developmentally Disabled	
Project id	Spokane	Sustainable Living Center	Walla Walla
Psychotherapy Cooperative	Seattle	Temple Beth Am	Seattle
Race to Remember	Vancouver	Terrain Programs	Spokane
Rainbow Center	Tacoma	The Boiler Room	Port Townsend
Rainier Valley Corps	Seattle	The Harder Foundation	Tacoma
Randall St Community Garden		The Leading Edge	Seattle
Rebuilding Together South Sound	Tacoma	The Museum of Flight	Seattle
Recovery Advocacy	Puyallup	The Mustard Seed Project of Key Peninsula	Vaughn
Rooted Emerging		The Olympic Beacon Group	Copalis Crossing
Sahsen Foundation		The Organizations of Northeast Spokane	Spokane
Salish School of Spokane	Spokane		
Satterberg Foundation	Seattle		
Schools for Salone			
Scout Finch Consulting	Seattle		
Seattle Arts & Lectures	Seattle		

The Peg and Rick Young Foundation	Seattle	Whidbey Children's Theater	Langley
The Russell Family Foundation	Gig Harbor	WhiteRock Consulting Group	Pullman
The Sophia Way	Bellevue	Whitman County Humane Society	Pullman
The Successful Transition and Reentry (STAR) Project	Walla Walla	Yakima Valley Community Foundation	Yakima
Tree of Life Sanctuary	Bellingham	Yield to the King Ministry	Seattle
Treehouse	Seattle	YMCA of the Inland Northwest	
Tri-Cities Food Bank	Richland	YMCA of the Palouse	Pullman
Trout Lake Care, Inc.	Trout Lake	YWCA Clark County	Vancouver
Turning Pointe Domestic Violence Services	Shelton	YWCA Kitsap County	Bremerton
United Way of Kitsap County	Bremerton	YWCA of Spokane	Spokane
Upper Valley MEND	Leavenworth	YWCA Olympia	Olympia
USA Softball of Washington State	Vancouver	YWCA Seattle King Snohomish	
Valley Community Center	Clarkston		
Valleyfest	Spokane Valley		
Vashon Interfaith Council To Prevent Homelessness	Vashon Island		
Vision for Independence Center			
Volunteers of America Eastern Washington & North Idaho	Spokane		
WA Appleseed	Seattle		
Waitsburg Historical Society	Waitsburg		
Walla Walla Community Hospice	Walla Walla		
Walla Walla Valley Farm to School			
Walla Walla YWCA			
Washington Apple Education Foundation	Wenatchee		
Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies	Seattle		
Washington Nonprofits	Seattle		
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility	Seattle		
Washington State Nurses Foundation			
Washington Statewide Capacity Collaborative			
Weed Warriors, Nature Stewards Program	Burien		
Wenatchee River Institute	Leavenworth		
Wenatchee Valley Humane Society	Wenatchee		
Whatcom Community Foundation	Bellingham		

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
Fidisco 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
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

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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