

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
2330 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Duffy:

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>Wisconsin</b>			
Advocates of Ozaukee	Saukville	Fortunate Futures	Milwaukee
ArtWorks for Milwaukee	Milwaukee	Forward Community Investments	Madison
Association for Pelvic Organ Prolapse Support	Mukwonago	Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.	Madison
AVK Education, Inc.	Glendale	Garden District Neighborhood Association	Milwaukee
Biodynamic Association	East Troy	Girl Scouts of Manitou Council	Sheboygan
Broadscope Disability Services	Greenfield	Good Friend, Inc.	Waukesha
Brookhill Institute of Mathematics	Waukesha	Harbor House Crisis Shelters, A Ministry of Faith United Methodist Church	Superior
Burleigh Street Community Development, Inc.	Milwaukee	Hearthstone Historic House Museum	Appleton
Center for Media and Democracy		Howe Community Resource Center	Green Bay
Center for Veterans Issues, Ltd.	Milwaukee	Hunger Task Force	Milwaukee
Chippewa Area Mentor Program	Chippewa Falls	IN Progress Consulting LLC	Milwaukee
Chippewa Valley Museum	Eau Claire	IndependenceFirst	Milwaukee
Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance	Eau Claire	J B Plumping	Milwaukee
Common Ground Ministry, Inc.		JDC Solutions	Milwaukee
Community Shares of Wisconsin	Madison	Jean Gurney & Co. LLC	Shorewood
Comunidad	Whitefish Bay	Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation	Milwaukee
COPE Services	Grafton	Kathy's House	
Covey	Allenton	La Causa, Inc.	Milwaukee
Cudahy-St. Francis Interfaith Diefenbach Communications Strategies	Milwaukee	Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc.	Milwaukee
Diverse and Resilient	Milwaukee	Madison Area Bus Advocates	Madison
Dolomite Marketing	Milwaukee	Madison Ballet, Inc.	Madison
Dominican Center		Madison Children's Museum	Madison
Door County Land Trust	Mequon	Madison Community Foundation	Madison
Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin	West Allis	Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council	Milwaukee
Ebenezer Child Care Centers, Inc.	Milwaukee	Milwaukee Center for Children and Youth, Inc.	Milwaukee
ERAs Senior Network, Inc.	Waukesha	Milwaukee City Council of PTAs, Inc.	Milwaukee
Ex Fabula	Milwaukee	Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity	Milwaukee
Feeding Wisconsin	Madison	Milwaukee Public Theatre	Milwaukee
Fond du Lac Area Foundation	Fond du Lac		

Moose International	Mukwonago	Urban Economic	
Muskego Senior Taxi	Muskego	Development Association	
Nativity Jesuit Academy	Milwaukee	of Wisconsin (UEDA)	Milwaukee
Natural Heritage Land Trust, Inc.	Madison	Veterans Employment	
Neighborhood House of Milwaukee	Milwaukee	Alliance, Inc.	Greenfield
NeighborWorks Blackhawk Region	Beloit	Vista Global Coaching & Consulting	Madison
Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee	Milwaukee	VLCF	
North Country Independent Living	superior	Volunteer Center of Ozaukee County	Grafton
Optimist Theatre	Milwaukee	WasteCap Resource	
Pathfinders Milwaukee, Inc.	Milwaukee	Solutions	Milwaukee
Penfield Children's Center	Milwaukee	Waukesha Civic Theatre	Waukesha
Project Concern	St. Francis	Ways to Work, Inc.	Milwaukee
Project Concern of Cudahy- St. Francis	Cudahy	Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies	
Racine Community Foundation	Racine	Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.	Madison
Rare & Undiagnosed Network	Delafield	Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired	Madison
River Falls Community Food Pantry	River Falls	Wisconsin Democracy Campaign	
Royal Academy of Dance	Milwaukee	Wisconsin EMS Association	Wind Lake
Savage Support Corp	Milwaukee	Wisconsin Lutheran High School	Milwaukee
Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin	Madison	Wisconsin Nonprofits Association	
Skylight Music Theatre	Milwaukee	Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development	Madison
Spectrum Nonprofit Services	Milwaukee	Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation	Milwaukee
Spotted Eagle, Inc.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin Transit Riders Alliance	Milwaukee
Stepping Stone Farms	Franksville	YWCA - Greater Green Bay	Green Bay
School of Horsemanship	Menomonie	YWCA Madison	Madison
Stepping Stones of Dunn County	Menomonie	YWCA Southeast Wisconsin	Milwaukee
The Addiction Resource Council, Inc.	Waukesha		
The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection	La Crosse		
The Rainbow Project, Inc. Child & Family Counseling and Trauma Resource Clinic	Madison		
The Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition	Milwaukee		
Three Gaits, Inc.	Stoughton		
Tikkun Ha-Ir	Milwaukee		
UPbrella			
Urban Affairs Association	Milwaukee		

**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  
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