

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED June 1, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
260 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

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,

Missouri			
		Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County	St. Peters
After the Harvest AIA	Kansas City	Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis	Saint Louis
Allied Arts Council of St. Joseph, MO, Inc.	St. Joseph	Harvesters - The Community Food Network	Kansas City
Americans United for Separation of Church and State - St. Louis Chapter	St. Louis	Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City
ArtsTech	Kansas City	HealthEd Connect	Lees Summit
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City	Heartland Foundation	
BikeWalkKC	Kansas City	Hillcrest Ministries, Inc.	Liberty
Bilingual International Assistant Services	St. Louis	James McNary and Joshua Logan Memorial Scholarship	Saint Louis
Blue River Watershed Association	Kansas City	Kansas City Artists Coalition	Kansas City
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City	Kansas City	Kansas City Consensus	Kansas City
BoysGrow		Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium	
Bridging The Gap	Kansas City	Kansas City Symphony	Kansas City
Camp Fire	Kansas City	KCPT Public Television	
Central Print	St. Louis	KMD Consulting	
Christ Lutheran Church	Webster Groves	Leadership USA, Inc.	Kansas City
Connections to Success		Lee's Summit Educational Foundation	Lee's Summit
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis	St. Louis	Legal Aid of Western Missouri	Kansas City
Corey's Network, Inc.	Independence	Loaves & Fishes Food Bank of the Ozarks	Shell Knob
Creative Reaction Lab	St. Louis	MainCor	Kansas City
Cristo Rey Kansas City High School	Kansas City	Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis	
Diastole Scholars' Center	Kansas City	MHAH	
Dribin and Associates	St. Louis	Missouri Botanical Garden	St Louis
EnCircle Technologies	Columbia	Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	Jefferson City
Episcopal City Mission	St. Louis	Missouri Family Health Council, Inc.	Ashland
Episcopal Community Services, Heartland	Kansas City	NAMI Southwest Missouri Network for Strong Communities	Springfield St Louis
Francis Family Foundation	Kansas City	Nonprofit Connect	Kansas City
G and V Organization	Northwood	Nonprofit Leadership Alliance	Kansas City
Gladiator Consulting LLC	St. Louis	Nonprofit Missouri	Jefferson City
GPS Missions	Greenfield		
Green Works in Kansas City	Kansas City		
Habitat for Humanity of Francois County, Inc.	Farmington		
Habitat for Humanity of Springfield, Missouri, Inc.	Springfield		

North Side Community School	
Northeast Community Center	Kansas City
Northland Shepherd's Center	Kansas City
NorthWest Communities Development Corporation	Independence
Optimist Club of St. Charles Missouri	Saint Charles
Our Little Haven	St Louis
Platte County Senior Fund	Kansas City
Platte Land Trust	Kansas City
Presbyterian Children's Homes & Services of MO	St. Louis County
Royals Charities	Kansas City
Safe Connections	St. Louis
Saint Louis Effort for AIDS	Saint Louis
SAVE, Inc.	Kansas City
SCG Nonprofits	Wildwood
Shia Islamic Education Center	Wildwood
Show Me KC Schools	Kansas City
Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired	St. Louis
Southeast Missouri Food Bank	Sikeston
Southtown Council	Kansas City
Special Horses, Inc.	St. Louis
Special Olympics Missouri	Lee's Summit
St. Louis Area Foodbank	Bridgeton
St. Teresa's Academy	Kansas City
Synergy Group	Wentzville
The Edgar Snow Memorial Foundation	Kansas City
The Ethics Project	St. Louis
The Hope Center KC	Kansas City
The South Cabin Group LLC	Wildwood
Turn the Page KC	Kansas City
Union Communion Ministries	St. Louis
Unlimited Play	St. Louis
Vasculitis Foundation	Kansas City
VisionServe Alliance	St. Louis
Wentzville School Foundation	
Women's Employment Network	Kansas City
Women's Foundation of Greater St. Louis	Saint Louis
Wright Care Dentistry	

National Organizations

Abila
 Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.
 AdoptAClassroom.org
 African Diaspora United, Inc.
 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
Celiac Disease Foundation
Center for Health, Environment & Justice
Center for Inquiry
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Citizen Schools
CleanSlateNow
Common Cause
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
Millennium Water Alliance
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 Soldiers and Sailors of America
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