

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Steve Daines  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daines:

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.

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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,

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| 9 Energies Center                                      | Bozeman     | Gallatin Valley Land Trust                    |                |
| A Carousel for Missoula                                | Missoula    | Garden City Harvest                           | Missoula       |
| Adult Resource Alliance                                | Billings    | Glacier County Regional Port Authority        | Cut Bank       |
| AERO   |             | Glacier National Park Conservancy             | Columbia Falls |
| Alliance for Youth                                     |             | Habitat for Humanity of Ravalli County        | Hamilton       |
| Anaconda Community Foundation                          | Anaconda    | HAVEN   | Bozeman        |
| Art Spot   | Malta       | Helena Area Community Foundation              | Helena         |
| ASPEN  | Livingston  | Helena Food Share                             | Helena         |
| B.E.A.R. (Bitterroot Ecological Awareness Resources)   | Hamilton    | Home ReSource                                 | Missoula       |
| Bear Paw Development Corporation                       | Havre       | Homeword                                      | Missoula       |
| Beartooth Recreational Trails Association              | Red Lodge   | Human Science Institute                       | Helena         |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County            | Bozeman     | Intermountain                                 | Helena         |
| Big Sky Youth Empowerment                              | Bozeman     | Intermountain Opera Association of Bozeman    | Bozeman        |
| Bike Walk Montana                                      | Helena      | Janna Lundquist Consulting                    |                |
| Bitterroot Collective Impact                           | Corvallis   | Jeannette Rankin Peace Center                 | Missoula       |
| Bozeman Public Library Foundation                      | Bozeman     | Kootenai Heritage Council                     | Libby          |
| Bridgercare  | Bozeman     | Laurel American Legion Post 123               | Laurel         |
| Career Futures, Inc.                                   | Butte       | Laurel Senior Citizens Center                 | Laurel         |
| Career Transitions, Inc.                               | Belgrade    | Leadership Montana                            | Bozeman        |
| Chany Reon Ockert Consulting LLC                       | Bigfork     | Living Art of Montana                         | Missoula       |
| ChildWise Institute                                    | Helena      | M+R - Montana Office                          | Missoula       |
| Citizens for a Better Flathead                         | Kalispell   | Marion Finley Friendship House                | Kalispell      |
| DEAP   | Miles City  | Missoula Aging Services                       | Missoula       |
| District 4 Human Resources Development Council         | Havre       | Missoula Art Museum                           | Missoula       |
| Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Carbon County | Red Lodge   | Missoula Community Foundation                 |                |
| Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain          | Great Falls | Missoula Interfaith Collaborative             | Missoula       |
| Eastern Montana CASA GAL Inc.                          | Miles City  | Missoula Manor Homes                          | Missoula       |
| Eastern Montana Industries                             | miles city  | Missoula Writing Collaborative                | Missoula       |
| Ecology Project International                          | Missoula    | Montana Association of Land Trusts            | Helena         |
| Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture                  | Bozeman     | Montana Association of Symphonies             |                |
| ExplorationWorks Science Center                        | Helena      | Montana Audubon                               | Helena         |
| Family Promise of Great Falls                          | Great Falls | Montana Community Foundation, Inc.            | Helena         |
| Family Service   | Billings    | Montana Conservation Corps                    | Bozeman        |
| Five Valleys Audubon Society                           | Missoula    | Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities | Helena         |
| Florence Crittenton Home and Services                  | Helena      | Montana Innocence Project                     | Missoula       |
| Foundation for Community Care of Richland County       | Sidney      | Montana Law Enforcement Museum                | Philipsburg    |
| Fox Hollow Animal Project                              |             | Montana Nonprofit Association                 | Helena         |
| Gallatin County Love Inc.                              | Bozeman     | Montana Oral Health Foundation                |                |
|  |             | Montana Outdoor Science School                | Bozeman        |
|  |             | Montana Outfitters and Guides Association     | Montana City   |
|  |             | Montana Shares                                | Helena         |

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|--|----------------|---|-------------|
| Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation                        | Columbia Falls | United Way of Yellowstone County                  | Billings    |
| Myrna Loy Center for Performing and Media Arts             | Helena         | Upper Swan Valley Historical Society, Inc.        | Condon      |
| Nate Chute Foundation                                      | Kalispell      | Verge Theater                                     | Bozeman     |
| National Center for Appropriate Technology                 | Butte          | Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation              | Bozeman     |
| NeighborWorks Montana                                      | Helena         | WaterWorks Art Museum                             |             |
| North Central Area Agency on Aging                         |                | West Mont   | Helena      |
| North Lake County Library Foundation Board                 | Polson         | West NW Consulting                                |             |
| North Valley Hospital Foundation                           | Whitefish      | Whitefish Community Foundation                    | Whitefish   |
| O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundation, Inc.                     | Red Lodge      | Wild Rockies Field Institute                      | Missoula    |
| Oneness Project  |                | Windhorse Equine Learning                         | Bozeman     |
| Opportunity Resources Inc.                                 | Missoula       | Women's Opportunity & Resource Development (WORD) | Missoula    |
| Orphan Girl Children's Theatre                             | Cardwell       | Women's Voices for the Earth                      |             |
| Partners Ensuring Equal Rights and Supports (PEERS)        | Helena         | Yellowstone Ecological Research Center            | Bozeman     |
| Peace Place  | Great Falls    | Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary                    | Red Lodge   |
| Prickly Pear Land Trust                                    | Helena         | Youth Connections                                 | Helena      |
| Project Hope   | Columbus       | Youth Homes, Inc.                                 | Helena      |
| Project Hope of Columbus PWF                               | Columbus       | YWCA Great Falls                                  | Great Falls |
| Ravalli County Museum                                      | Hamilton       | YWCA of Missoula                                  | Missoula    |
| Reach, Inc.  | Bozeman        |   |             |
| Red Lodge Area Community Foundation                        | Red Lodge      |   |             |
| Rural Dynamics, Inc.                                       | Great Falls    |   |             |
| SAFE Harbor Inc.   | Ronan          |   |             |
| Sage Solutions Nonprofit Consulting, LLC                   | Bozeman        |   |             |
| Smith River Habitat Project                                | Clancy         |   |             |
| Snowy Mountain Development Corporation                     | Lewistown      |   |             |
| Special K Ranch, Inc.                                      | Columbus       |   |             |
| Special Olympics Montana                                   | Great Falls    |   |             |
| St. John's Lutheran Ministries                             | Billings       |   |             |
| Sunburst Community Service Foundation                      | Eureka         |   |             |
| Swan View Coalition  | Kalispell      |   |             |
| Sweet Pea, A Festival of the Arts                          | Bozeman        |   |             |
| Tamarack Grief Resource Center                             |                |   |             |
| The Clay Studio of Missoula                                | Missoula       |   |             |
| The Flagship Program, Western Montana Mental Health Center | Missoula       |   |             |
| The Montana Actors' Theatre                                | Havre          |   |             |
| The Montana Racial Equity Project                          | Bozeman        |   |             |
| The Nurturing Center                                       | Kalispell      |   |             |
| The Traveling School                                       | Bozeman        |   |             |
| The University of Montana Western Foundation               | Dillon         |   |             |
| The Vital Ground Foundation                                | Missoula       |   |             |
| United Way of Beaverhead County                            | Dillon         |   |             |

## National Organizations

Abila  
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.  
AdoptAClassroom.org  
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  
American Alliance of Museums  
American Association of Anatomists  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Association of Teachers of German  
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

Annie E. Casey Foundation  
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  
Ecology Project International  
Engineering Conferences International  
Feed the Children  
Feeding America  
Food & Water Watch  
Ford Foundation  
Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers  
Free Press  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Girls Inc.  
Global Integrity  
Goodwill Industries, International  
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 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 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  
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Center for Fire and Life Safety  
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
National Council of Behavioral Health  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Nonprofits  
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

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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 Commonwealth Fund  
The Dibble Institute  
The Educational Foundation of America  
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation  
The Ocean Foundation  
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
The Voter Participation Center  
TIDES  
Unemployment Services Trust  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Way Worldwide  
University Professional & Continuing  
Education Association  
US Lacrosse  
Vasculitis Foundation  
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