

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED April 27, 2018

The Honorable John H. Hoeven III  
338 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hoeven:

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>North Dakota</b>			
		Native American Development Center	Bismarck
Anne Carlsen Center		New American Consortium for Wellness and Empowerment	Fargo
Bethel Lutheran Foundation	Williston	North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations	Bismarck
Beyond Shelter, Inc.	Fargo	North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People	Bismarck
Bishop Ryan Catholic School Foundation	Minot	North Dakota Community Foundation	
Centre, Inc.		North Dakota Women's Network	Bismarck
Charles Hall Youth Services	Bismarck	Northern Plains Dance	Bismarck
Community Action Partnership - Dickinson / Williston Regions	Dickinson		Grand
Community Action Partnership of ND	Fargo	Northlands Rescue Mission	Forks
Community Action Partnership of North Dakota		Prairie Learning Center Foundation	Bismarck
Community Action Partnership- Minot Region	Minot	Rape and Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead	Fargo
Community Action Program Region VII, Inc.	Bismarck	Red Door Art Gallery and Museum	Wahpeton
Community Action Region VI	Jamestown	Sacred Heart Benedictine Foundation	Richardton
Community Violence Intervention Center	Grand Forks	Souris Valley United Way	Minot
Dakota Prairie Community Action Agency	Devils Lake	Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency	Fargo
	Grand Forks		Grand Forks
Dakota Science Center	Grand Forks	Special Olympics North Dakota	
	Grand Forks	Strengthen ND	Minot
Development Homes, Inc.	Fargo	The Arts Partnership	Fargo
Eastern Dakota Housing Alliance	Bismarck	The Consensus Council, Inc.	Bismarck
Gateway to Science	Grand Forks	The Tom and Frances Leach Foundation	Bismarck
Global Friends Coalition	Fargo	Three Rivers Arts Council	Wahpeton
Great Plains Food Bank		Tobacco Free North Dakota	Bismarck
Institute for Community and Adolescent Resilience	Lidgerwood		Rocky Mount
Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota	Fargo	Tri-County Industries, Inc.	
Minot Area Community Foundation	Minot	United Way of Dickinson, Inc.	
Minot Area Homeless Coalition	Minot	United Way of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Area	Grand Forks
Missouri Valley Historical Society, Buckstop Junction	Bismarck	Western North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Bismarck

### 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