

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Chris Smith
2373 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

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,

New Jersey Organizations

A. L. Ball CPA	Somerset	Community Outreach Services, Inc.	Paterson
Above The Rim, Inc. of Newark	Newark	Community Planning & Advocacy Council	
Advance Housing, Inc.	Teterboro	Concerned Persons for Adoption Summit	
Agraj Seva Kendra	Monroe Township	COPE	
Algonquin Arts Theatre		Council of New Jersey Grantmakers	Trenton
American Association of Teachers of German	Cherry Hill	CPFANJ	Garwood
Anaththoh Foundation		Creative Capacity	
Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey		Creative Communications	Edison
Art House Productions	Jersey City	Creative New Jersey	
ArtZwag		CUMAC	Paterson
Associate Alumnae of Douglass College	New Brunswick	D.G. McDermott Associates, LLC	Red Bank
Bayshore Family of Companies	Keasbey	Delaware Valley Americans United for Separation of Church and State	Clayton
BazanED		Dress for Success Morris County	
Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative (BVMI)	Hackensack	Edison Greenways Group, Inc.	Edison
Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County	Lawrenceville	Educational Arts Team	Jersey City
Camden Area Health Education Center	Camden	Fabian Consulting, Inc.	Hightstown
Capacity Building and Policy Experts	Pennington	Family and Children's Services	
Carolyn Dorfman Dance	Union	Family Resource Associates, Inc.	
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton	Trenton	Financial Wellness Institute	Deptford
Center for Non-Profits		First Congregational Church of Montclair	
Center for Regenerative Community Solutions	Basking Ridge	Foster and Adoptive Family Services	
Central Jersey Family Health Consortium	North Brunswick	FRA	
Chen Dance Company	Englewood Cliffs	Freedom Center for Wildlife Inc.	Cinnaminson
Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation		Fylstra & Associates, LLC	Allendale
Christ Episcopal Church	Island Heights	Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation	Morristown
Christ the King Preparatory School	Glen Ridge	GlassRoots	Newark
Clear, Effective Communications	Jersey City	GreggSmith.com, Inc.	Princeton
		Gubarry Inc.	South Orange
		Heightened Independence & Progress (hip)	Hackensack
		Histiocytosis Association	Pitman
		HiTOPS, Inc.	Princeton
		hob'art co-operative gallery	Hoboken
		Holiday Express	Tinton Falls
		Home Care Options	Paterson
		HomeFront	Lawrenceville

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New Jersey

Homeless Solutions, Inc.	Morristown	New Jersey Future	Trenton
Hope Community Outreach	Camden	New Jersey Policy Perspective	Morristown
Hudson County Housing Resource Center	Jersey City	New Jersey Public Health Association	Piscataway
Hudson River Apiary Society	North Bergen	New Jersey SHARES, Inc.	Ewing
Hyacinth AIDS Foundation	New Brunswick	New Jersey State Museum Foundation	Trenton
Interfaith Hospitality Network - Essex	Montclair	New Jersey Theatre Alliance	West Orange
Ironbound Community Corporation	Newark	New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	New Jersey
JCDTOC, Inc.		New Jersey Youth Development Foundation	Kenilworth
Jersey Battered Women's Service	Morristown	New York-New Jersey Trail Conference	Mahwah
Jewish Community Relations Council of Southern New Jersey	Cherry Hill	Newark LGBTQ Community Center	Newark
Kessler Foundation	East Hanover	NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence	Trenton
Kids Corporation II	Newark	NJ State Association of Jewish Federations	Scotch Plains
Literacy Volunteers of America - Monmouth County	Long Branch	NOFA-NJ	
Love of Jesus Food Pantry	Paterson	NORWESCAP	Phillipsburg
Lumad Journey Healing Ministries, LLC	Red Bank	Ocean's Harbor House	Toms River
Magical Healing	Wayne	oneCommunityConnect	Irvington
Manufactured Home Owners Association of New Jersey, Inc.	New Jersey	'Ōpio Haku Mo'olelo Outpost in the Burbs, Inc.	Branchburg
Marcia Smith Fleres LLC	Plainsboro	Paradise Consulting	Montclair
Marie Adelaide Center/ Adelaide's Place	Atlantic City	Partners for Health Foundation	Cranford
Maushumi Nerurkar	Belle Mead	Partners for Women and Justice	Montclair
MGR Counseling, LLC	Camden	Pascale Sykes Foundation, Inc.	
Mi Casita Day Care Center, Inc.	Camden	Paterson Alliance	Paterson
Monmouth Conservation Foundation	Middletown	Paterson Education Fund	Paterson
Morris Arts	Morristown	Paterson Task Force for Community Action, Inc.	Paterson
Morris County Historical Society	Morris Plains	Peg Wright	Somerset
Morris Park Alliance		Perth Amboy Artworks, Inc.	Perth Amboy
Mosaic Dance Theater Company	Glen Ridge	Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey	Somerville
Music/Art of NJ, Inc.	Paterson	Praise Consulting	
My Eternal Family	Mount Laurel	Prime for Results International	
NAMI Camden County		Princeton AlumniCorps	Princeton, Jersey City, Camden
New Eyes for the Needy	Short Hills	Pro Arts Jersey City	Jersey City
New Jersey Association of Community Providers		Puerto Rican Unity for Progress	Camden
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.	Mercerville	Pushcart Players	Verona
New Jersey Association on Correction	Trenton	Ray Mueller Productions	Stanhope
New Jersey Community Capital	New Brunswick	Rescue Hands United International, Inc.	Elizabeth
		Resource Education Awareness by Latinos in Teaneck	New Jersey

Rock Brook School Skillman
 Rutgers Institute for Ethical Newark
 Leadership
 Rutgers TEEM Gateway Camden
 Sammy's Hope, Inc. Sayreville
 Scamera Consulting Services Bloomfield
 Seashore Family Services of NJ Brick
 Society For Preservation of Oakhurst
 Continued Homeownership
 Society In The Ekos, Inc. Boonton
 Sojihuggles Children's Newton
 Foundation
 St. Paul's Community Paterson
 Development Corporation
 St. Peter's Haven Clifton
 Statewide Parent Advocacy
 Network, Inc.
 Sustainable West Milford Hewitt
 Tabernacle of Faith Church
 Team Management 2000, Inc. Hackensack
 Tewksbury Land Trust Morristown
 The Affum-Darkwah Mission Orange
 International, Inc. (TADMI)
 The Anxiety & Depression Totowa
 Initiative, Inc.
 The Arc Foundation of Somerset Fat Hills
 County
 The Arc of New Jersey North
 Brunswick
 The Atlantic Foundation Hamilton
 The Community YMCA Shrewsbury
 The Enrichment Center for New Jersey
 Women, Children & Families,
 Inc.
 The Fund for New Jersey
 The Growing Stage - The Netcong
 Children's of New Jersey
 The New School for Music Study Kingston
 The Women's Center Linwood
 Trenton Area Soup Kitchen Trenton
 Triple C Housing, Inc. Monmouth
 Junction
 Unitarian Universalist Legislative Summit
 Ministry of NJ
 United Way of Central Jersey Milltown
 University-NOW Day Nursery Princeton
 Victoria Foundation Newark
 Vintage Automobile Museum Of Forked River
 NJ
 Virtua
 Visual Arts Center of New Jersey Summit

Volunteers of America Delaware Collingswood
 Valley
 WHYSaveALife Foundation
 Women Aware, Inc. New
 Brunswick
 Woodlands Wildlife Refuge North

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
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

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New Jersey

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