Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship
UPDATED June 1, 2018

The Honorable Mark Amodei
332 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Amodei:

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,

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**Nevada**

3rd Creek Foundation  
Incline Village

ACCEPT  
Reno

Alliance for Nevada Nonprofits  
Las Vegas

Angel's Power Ltd.  
Las Vegas

Burlesque Hall of Fame, Inc.  
Las Vegas

Foster Kinship  
Reno

Girl Scouts of the Sierra Nevada  
Reno

Helping Hands of Vegas Valley, Inc.  
Las Vegas

Immunize Nevada  
Las Vegas

JCC of Southern Nevada  
Las Vegas

Junior League of Las Vegas  
Las Vegas

Southern Nevada Women Veterans Coalition  
Las Vegas

The Gay & Lesbian Center of Southern Nevada  
Las Vegas

Valor CSR  
Las Vegas

Veterans Guest House  
Reno

**National Organizations**

Abila  

Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.

AdoptAClassroom.org  

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  

African Diaspora United, Inc.

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