

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED June 1, 2018

The Honorable James Lankford
316 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lankford,

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,

Oklahoma			
108 Contemporary	Tulsa	Council on American - Islamic Relations, Oklahoma Chapter	Oklahoma City
4RKids	Enid	Creative Supports Ranch	Marland
A Chance to Change	Oklahoma City	Crossroads Clubhouse	Tulsa
Abba's Family	Tahlequah	Crossroads Hospice	Tulsa
Ada Arts and Heritage Trust Authority	Ada	Charitable Foundation	
Ada Homeless Services	Ada	Crosstown Learning Center, Inc.	Tulsa
Aim High Academy		Daily Living Centers of Oklahoma	Bethany
Among Friends Activity Center	Norman	D-DENT, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Anna's House Foundation		Easter Seals Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Ardmore Habitat for Humanity, Inc.	Ardmore	Edmond Historical Society & Museum	Edmond
Areawide Aging Agency, Inc.	Oklahoma City	Edmond Mobile Meals	
Arnall Family Foundation	Oklahoma City	Educational Alternatives	Norman
Avedis Foundation	Shawnee	Executive Service Corps of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Best Friends of Pets	Oklahoma City	Fairland Farmers Market	Fairland
Bethany Improvement Foundation	Bethany	Family Builders, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Bethesda		Family Safety Center Tulsa	Tulsa
Big Brothers Big Sisters		Five Civilized Tribes Museum	Muskogee
Board of Directors of KIPR	Norman	Food and Shelter	Norman
Boys & Girls Club of Durant	Durant	Forster Consulting LLC	Oklahoma City
Bridges of Norman	Norman	Gatesway Foundation, Inc.	Broken Arrow
Brighter Outlook		Gateway to Prevention & Recovery	Shawnee
Broken Arrow Community Playhouse	Broken Arrow	Girls on the Run of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Buffalo Grass Arts Institute	Clinton	Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Camp Fire Green Country	Tulsa	Goodwill Industries of Tulsa	
CAP Tulsa	Tulsa	Great Plains Region of AMBUCS	
Cargo Ranch		Har-Ber Village on Grand Lake O' The Cherokees	Grove
CASA of Cherokee Country	Tahlequah	Health Alliance for the Uninsured	Oklahoma City
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City	Heartline, Inc.	
Cherokee National Historical Society, Inc.	Tahlequah	Hearts for Hearing	Oklahoma City
Children's Hospital Foundation	Oklahoma City	Hope Chest OKC	
Christians Concerned and Duncan Area Literacy Council	Duncan	HSI Sensing	Chickasha
Cities In Schools, Inc.	Ardmore	Impact	Edmond
Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma	Tulsa	Impact Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Community Health Foundation of Ponca City	Ponca City	INCA Community Services, Inc.	Tishomingo

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Independent Transportation Network of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	NorthCare	Oklahoma City
Indian Health Care Resource Center		Nth Gift LLC	Tulsa
Infant Crisis Services, Inc.	Oklahoma City	OASIS Adult Day Services	Tulsa
ITN Central Oklahoma		OK Mozart, Inc.	Bartlesville
Jasmine Moran Children's Museum	Seminole	OKC Dream Center	Oklahoma City
Jim Riley Outreach		OKC Metro Alliance, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Junior League of Norman	Norman	OKC Police Athletic League	Oklahoma City
JustHope	Tulsa	Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts	Oklahoma City
Kay Ray CPA		Oklahoma Blood Institute	
Kelly B. Todd Cerebral Palsy & Neuro-Muscular Foundation, Inc.	Muskogee	Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits	Oklahoma City
Kirkpatrick Family Fund	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma Children's Theatre	Oklahoma City
Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra	Lawton	Oklahoma City Beautiful	Oklahoma City
Leap O' Faith Therapeutic Riding Center	Ada	Oklahoma City Metro Literacy Coalition	Oklahoma City
Legacy International	Yukon	Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum	Oklahoma City
Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc.	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre	Oklahoma City
Lighthouse Properties LLC	Tulsa	Oklahoma City University Graduate Program in Nonprofit Leadership	Oklahoma City
Limbs for Life Foundation	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City Zoo	
Little Light House	Tulsa	Oklahoma Guardian Ad Litem Institute	Oklahoma City
Lowe Family Young Scholars Program	Bartlesville	Oklahoma Hall of Fame	Oklahoma City
Luna Sol Consulting	Tulsa	Oklahoma Heart Gallery	Tulsa
Lyric Theater of Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy	Oklahoma City
Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art	Shawnee	Oklahoma Museums Association	Oklahoma City
Marlow Samaritans	Marlow	Oklahoma Performing Arts, Inc.	Tulsa
McLaughlin Family Foundation	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma Policy Institute	Tulsa
Meals on Wheels of Metro Tulsa	Tulsa	Oklahoma Railway Museum	Oklahoma City
Medical Equipment Assistance Program, Inc.		Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice	Tulsa
Mental Health Association Oklahoma		Oklahoma Women's Coalition	Oklahoma City
MetaFund	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma Zoological Society	
Metropolitan	Oklahoma City	Oklahomans for the Arts	Oklahoma City
Misfits, Mutts and Meows		Okmulgee County Homeless Shelter	Okmulgee
Moore Youth and Family Services	Moore	Operation Aware of Oklahoma	Tulsa
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum	Oklahoma City	Operation C.A.R.E Ministries	Altus
NBC Oklahoma	Altus	Opportunities Industrialization Center of Oklahoma County (OIC)	Oklahoma City
Neighborhood Alliance	Oklahoma City	Opry Heritage Foundation of OK	Oklahoma City
New Hope Oklahoma, Inc.	Tulsa	Osage County Historical Society/Museum	
NewView Oklahoma	Oklahoma City		
Non-Profit Health Organization	Enid		

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Other Options, Inc.		Skyline Urban Ministry	Oklahoma City
Outreach Education Initiative	Tulsa	Smart Growth Tulsa	Tulsa
PAGES OKC	Oklahoma City	Smart Start Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Panhandle Services for Children, Inc.	Guymon	Special Care	Oklahoma City
Parents Helping Parents		Special Olympics Oklahoma	Tulsa
Paseo Arts Association	Oklahoma City	Stillwater CARES	Stillwater
Pathways Adult Learning Center	Tulsa	Surayya Anne Foundation OKC	Oklahoma City
Payne Education Center	Oklahoma City	TARC	Tulsa
Peaceful Family Solutions	Oklahoma City	Teen Recovery Solutions	Oklahoma City
Perinatal Quality Foundation	Oklahoma City	The Anna's House Foundation	
Philbrook Museum of Art	Tulsa	The Boys & Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County	Oklahoma City
Phillips Theological Seminary	Tulsa	The Children's Hospital VOLUNTEERS, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Pollard Theatre Company	Guthrie	The Eden Clinic, Inc.	Norman
Ponca City Arts and Humanities	Ponca City	The First Tee of Tulsa	Tulsa
Pontotoc Animal Welfare Society	Ada	The Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools	Oklahoma City
Positive Tomorrows	Oklahoma City	The Global Foundation for Peroxisomal Disorders	Tulsa
Poteau Valley Humane Society	Poteau	The Homeless Alliance	Oklahoma City
Potts Family Foundation	Norman	The How-To Palace	Altus
Pride In McAlester	McAlester	The Islamic Council of Oklahoma	
Project Hope Worldwide		The Little Light House, Inc.	Tulsa
Promoting Animal Welfare Society, Inc.	Muskogee	The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals	
Purple Ink		The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy	Oklahoma City
RAIN Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	The Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care	Oklahoma City
Rebuilding Together OKC	Oklahoma City	The Pencil Box	Tulsa
Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	The Propel Foundation Incorporated	Oklahoma City
ReMerge	Oklahoma City	The Recovery Center	Oklahoma City
Resonator	Norman	Tiny Paws Kitten Rescue	Stillwater
Restore Hope Ministries	Tulsa	To By For Kids Foundation	Oklahoma City
Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Tulsa, Inc.	Tulsa	Tri-City Youth & Family Center, Inc.	Choctaw
Route 66 Alliance	Tulsa	TSHA - Total Source for Hearing-loss and Access	Tulsa
RSVP of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	Tulsa Area United Way	Tulsa
RSVP Tulsa, Inc.		Tulsa Botanic Garden	Tulsa
Sand Springs Community Services	Sand Springs	Tulsa Camerata	Tulsa
Sand Springs Education Foundation	Sand Springs	Tulsa Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy	Tulsa
Second Chance And Reentry Services	EL Reno	Tulsa Fire Museum, Inc.	Tulsa
Senior Citizens of Shawnee, Inc.	Shawnee	Tulsa Girls Art School	
Sharpshooter Communications, LLC	Tulsa	Tulsa Modern Movement	Tulsa
Shortgrass Arts and Humanities Council		Tulsa Opera, Inc.	Tulsa
SixTwelve	Oklahoma City	Tulsa Symphony Orchestra	Tulsa

United Way of Central Oklahoma	Edmond
Up With Trees	Tulsa
Upward Transitions, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Volunteers of America Oklahoma, Inc.	Tulsa
Wagoner Literacy Group	
Warriors for Freedom Foundation	Oklahoma City
Westview Boys' Home	Hollis
Wings A Special Needs Community	Oklahoma City
Women Lead Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Woodward Arts & Theatre Council, Inc.	Woodward
World Neighbors, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City
Youth At Heart	Tulsa
Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Youth Services of Tulsa	Tulsa
YWCA Enid	Enid
YWCA Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City
Zealot Branding	Tulsa

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
 Champion 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

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

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

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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