

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Jim Bridenstine
216 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bridenstine:

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,

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

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

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Opportunities Industrialization Center of Oklahoma County (OIC)	Oklahoma City	Sand Springs Education Foundation	Sand Springs
Opry Heritage Foundation of OK	Oklahoma City	Second Chance And Reentry Services	EL Reno
Osage County Historical Society/Museum		Senior Citizens of Shawnee, Inc.	Shawnee
Other Options, Inc.		Sharpshooter Communications, LLC	Tulsa
PAGES OKC	Oklahoma City	Shortgrass Arts and Humanities Council	
Panhandle Services for Children, Inc.	Guymon	SixTwelve	Oklahoma City
Parents Helping Parents		Skyline Urban Ministry	Oklahoma City
Paseo Arts Association	Oklahoma City	Smart Growth Tulsa	Tulsa
Pathways Adult Learning Center	Tulsa	Smart Start Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City
Payne Education Center	Oklahoma City	Special Care	Oklahoma City
Peaceful Family Solutions	Oklahoma City	Special Olympics Oklahoma	Tulsa
Philbrook Museum of Art	Tulsa	Stillwater CARES	Stillwater
Phillips Theological Seminary	Tulsa	Surayya Anne Foundation OKC	Oklahoma City
Pollard Theatre Company	Guthrie	TARC	Tulsa
Ponca City Arts and Humanities	Ponca City	Teen Recovery Solutions	Oklahoma City
Pontotoc Animal Welfare Society	Ada	The Anna's House Foundation	
Positive Tomorrows	Oklahoma City	The Boys & Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County	Oklahoma City
Poteau Valley Humane Society	Poteau	The Children's Hospital VOLUNTEERS, Inc.	Oklahoma City
Potts Family Foundation	Norman	The First Tee of Tulsa	Tulsa
Pride In McAlester	McAlester	The Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools	Oklahoma City
Project Hope Worldwide		The Global Foundation for Peroxisomal Disorders	Tulsa
Promoting Animal Welfare Society, Inc.	Muskogee	The Homeless Alliance	Oklahoma City
Purple Ink		The How-To Palace	Altus
RAIN Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	The Islamic Council of Oklahoma	
Rebuilding Together OKC	Oklahoma City	The Little Light House, Inc.	Tulsa
Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals	
ReMerge	Oklahoma City	The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy	Oklahoma City
Resonator	Norman	The Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care	Oklahoma City
Restore Hope Ministries	Tulsa	The Pencil Box	Tulsa
Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Tulsa, Inc.	Tulsa	The Propel Foundation Incorporated	Oklahoma City
Route 66 Alliance	Tulsa	The Recovery Center	Oklahoma City
RSVP of Central Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	Tiny Paws Kitten Rescue	Stillwater
RSVP Tulsa, Inc.			
Sand Springs Community Services	Sand Springs		

To By For Kids Foundation	Oklahoma City	AdoptAClassroom.org
Tri-City Youth & Family Center, Inc.	Choctaw	Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
TSHA - Total Source for Hearing-loss and Access	Tulsa	Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Tulsa Area United Way	Tulsa	American Alliance of Museums
Tulsa Botanic Garden	Tulsa	American Association of Anatomists
Tulsa Camerata	Tulsa	American Association of Physics Teachers
Tulsa Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy	Tulsa	American Association of Teachers of German
Tulsa Fire Museum Inc.	Tulsa	American Bladder Cancer Society
Tulsa Girls Art School		American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
Tulsa Modern Movement	Tulsa	American Brass Chamber Music Association
Tulsa Opera, Inc.	Tulsa	American Conference of Academic Deans
Tulsa Symphony Orchestra	Tulsa	American Heart Association
United Way of Central Oklahoma	Edmond	American Historical Association
United Way of Oklahoma		American Jewish Committee
Up With Trees	Tulsa	American Medical Association Foundation
Upward Transitions, Inc.	Oklahoma City	American Physiological Society
Volunteers of America Oklahoma, Inc.	Tulsa	American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.
Wagoner Literacy Group		American Red Cross
Warriors for Freedom Foundation	Oklahoma City	Americans for the Arts
Westview Boys' Home	Hollis	Americans Promoting Study Abroad
Wheatheart Nutrition Project Inc.	Ponca City	Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Wings A Special Needs Community	Oklahoma City	Amyloidosis Foundation
Women Lead Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	Annie E. Casey Foundation
Woodward Arts & Theatre Council, Inc.	Woodward	Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
World Neighbors, Inc.	Oklahoma City	Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Oklahoma City, Inc.	Oklahoma City	Association of American Colleges and Universities
Youth At Heart	Tulsa	Association of Art Museum Directors
Youth Services for Oklahoma County, Inc.	Oklahoma City	Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel
Youth Services of Tulsa	Tulsa	Association of Fundraising Professionals
YWCA Enid	Enid	Association of Immunization Managers
YWCA Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City	Association of Nature Center Administrators
Zealot Branding	Tulsa	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

National Organizations

Abila
 Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.

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
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

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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