

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
2431 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Schrader:

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,

Oregon Organizations

Alano Club of Portland	Portland	La Pine Community Kitchen	La Pine
Alisa Blum & Associates		Lake County Resources Initiative	Lakeview
Anne E. Denecke, PC		Laudato si' USA	Portland
Birthingway College of Midwifery	Portland	Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School	
Breast Friends, Oregon		Main Street Mosier	Mosier
CASA of Oregon	Sherwood	MCTF	Vida
Cascades Raptor Center	Eugene	Meals on Wheels People	Portland
Cat Adoption Team		Meyer Memorial Trust	Portland
Chinquapin Center for the Arts	Grants Pass	Molalla Warming Center	Molalla
Coalition Advocating for Animals	Salem	Mosaic Consulting	Portland
Coastal Celtic Society	Coos Bay	Mother Teresa Home dba Magdalene Home	Medford
Cogeo	Portland	Mysten Shenker, CPA	Portland
College Dreams	Grants Pass	National Indian Child Welfare Association	Portland
Columbia Pacific Food Bank	Saint Helens	Nonprofit Association of Oregon	Portland
Community Housing Fund	Beaverton	Northwest College of the Liberal Arts	Portland
Cornerstone Community Housing	Eugene	Northwest Pilot Project, Inc.	Portland
Cottage Theatre	Cottage Grove	ONABEN	Portland
Creswell at Home, Inc.	Creswell	Oregon Food Bank	Portland
Delgani String Quartet	Eugene	OregonASK	Wilsonville
Donate Life Northwest	Portland	ORI Community and Evaluation Services	Eugene
Eastco Diversified Services, Inc.	Gresham	People for Parks Oregon	Portland
ECA	Portland	Phoenix Finance	Portland
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon	Portland	Phoenix Rising Transitions	Gresham
F.I.N.F.I.D. International Foundation	Portland	Raziah Roushan, Inc.	Beaverton
Facilitation & Process, LLC	Portland	Renewable Northwest	Portland
Four Rivers Health Care	Ontario	Returning Veterans Project	
Friendly House	Portland	Rogue Valley Chorale Association	Rogue River
Friends Of South Slough	Coos Bay	Rogue Valley Youth Choruses	
Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge	Sherwood	ROSE Community Development	Portland
Friends of the West Slope Library	Portland	Shangri La Corporation	Salem
Fritz Consulting	Bend	Silverton Together, Inc.	Silverton
Give Voice		Society for Syncopated Drumming	Portland
Go To Help, LLC	Portland	Sojourner Education Foundation	Milwaukie
Grantmakers of Oregon and Southwest Washington		Southern Oregon Child and Family Council	Central Point
Grants Pass Museum of Art	Grants Pass	SPOON	Portland
Grounded Solutions Network		St. Vincent de Paul Society	Eugene
Health Care for All-Oregon	Portland	Tanker 61 Memorial	
Heart of Oregon Corps	Bend	The Ford Family Foundation	Roseburg
In This Together	Troutdale	The Learning Commons	Portland
Itching to Help! LLC			
Jayne Cravens, Consultant	Forest Grove		

The Museum At Warm Springs
 THSC
 Tom McCall Legacy Project Milwaukie
 Transition Projects Portland
 United Way of Columbia County Rainier
 Vernonia Hands on Art Center Vernonia
 Wellsprings Friends School Eugene
 Western Arts Alliance Portland
 Willamette Resources and
 Educational Network Eugene
 Yamhill CDC d/b/a Community McMinnville
 Home
 Yamhill Community Action McMinnville
 Partnership Food Bank

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
 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

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

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
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