Dear Representative Wilson:

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,

South Carolina

1000 Feathers, LLC Cayce
A Child's Haven Greenville
Adult Enrichment Centers
AID Upstate
Alliance For Full Acceptance Charleston
Alston Wilkes Society Columbia
Angels Charge Ministry Spartanburg
Association for the Blind and Charleston
Visually Impaired
Beginnings SC West Columbia
Bellwether Non-Profit Advisors Simpsonville
Black River United Way Georgetown
Callie and John Rainey Anderson
Foundation
Carolina Business Equipment Columbia
Carolina Human Reinvestment
Catherine Jones Consulting Columbia
Ccbordzad consulting
Central Carolina Community Foundation
Centre Stage-SC! Greenville
Charleston Animal Society
Charleston Stands North Charleston
Child Abuse Prevention Charleston
Association
Children's Attention Home Port Royal
Children's Museum of the
Lowcountry Rock Hill
Children's Recovery Center Charleston
Church Street Historic Foundation Georgetown
Clemmons Thomas Consulting, LLC Camden
Clover Area Assistance Center Saint Stephen
Coastal Conservation League Clover
Columbia Children's Theatre Charleston
Columbia World Affairs Council Columbia
Community Foundation of Greenville
Craig Farm Historic Preservation Society Lancaster
Dining for Women Greenville
Dorchester Children's Center Summerville
Eat Smart Move More SC Columbia
Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center Columbia
Family Services, Inc. d/b/a Origin SC North Charleston
Florence County Disabilities Foundation Lake City
Georgetown SC Habitat for Humanity Pawleys Island
Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina Florence
Girls on the Run Charleston Charleston
Gravatt Camp and Conference Center Aiken
Greenville Family Partnership Greenville
Greenville Literacy Association Greenville
Greenville Partnership for Philanthropy Greenville
Greenwood County Community Foundation Greenwood
Greer Relief & Resources Agency, Inc. Greer
Habitat for Humanity Georgetown
Georgetown County Greenville
Habitat for Humanity Greenville SC Greenville
Helping Hands of Georgetown Georgetown
Home Works of America Columbia
Hope Center for Children Spartanburg
Hope Remains Youth Ranch Wellford
Increasing H.O.P.E Financial Training Center North Charleston
Institute for Practical Theology Columbia
International Primate Protection League Summerville
IRCS - Ivoire Rural Communication Services Charleston
Justice 360 Columbia
Kiawah Cares Foundation Kiawah Island
Kingdom Kids Foundation Taylors
Koinonia Communities, LLC Lancaster
Lancaster County Council of the Arts Lancaster
Lowcountry Food Bank  
Lowcountry Local First  
Maia Moms  
Martha W. Daniels Foundation  
Miracle Hill Ministries  
NAMI Lowcountry  
National Royal Miss  
Neighbor to Neighbor of South Carolina  
New Morning Foundation  
North Charleston Pops!  
Pregnancy Center and Clinic of the Lowcountry  
Reid Lehman Consulting  
SC Independent Colleges and Universities  
Second Helpings  
Skip To My Lupus, Inc.  
South Carolina Afterschool Alliance  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Carolina Arts Alliance  
South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development  
South Carolina Cancer Alliance  
South Carolina Christian Action Council  
South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council  
St. Luke’s Free Medical Clinic  
Still Hopes  
Susan G. Komen Lowcountry  
The Arc of South Carolina  
The Dream Center of Pickens County, Inc.  
The Early Learning Partnership of York County  
The Gambrill Foundation  
The Heart2Heart Foundation, Inc.  
The Springs Close Foundation  
The Stringer Foundation  
The Upton Trio  
The Warehouse Theatre  
The Weathers Group  
The Wellness Council for SC  
Together SC  
Trio Solutions Inc.  
United Christian Ministries  
United Way Association of South Carolina  
United Way of Greenville County  
United Way of Oconee County, Inc.  
United Way of Sumter, Clarendon & Lee Counties  
United Way of the Midlands  
Upstate International  
Upstate SC Chapter of Americans United  
Windwood Farm Home for Children, Inc.  
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network  

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**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  
Americans for the Arts  
Americans Promoting Study Abroad  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Amyloidosis Foundation
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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