

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Jeff D. Duncan  
2229 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Duncan:

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,

<b>South Carolina Organizations</b>			
1000 Feathers, LLC	Cayce	Georgetown SC Habitat for Humanity	Pawleys Island
A Child's Haven	Greenville	Girls on the Run	Charleston
Adult Enrichment Centers		Gravatt Camp and Conference Center	Aiken
AID Upstate	Greenville	Greenville Family Partnership	Greenville
Alliance For Full Acceptance	Charleston	Greenville Literacy Association	Greenville
Alston Wilkes Society		Greenwood County Community Foundation	Greenwood
Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Charleston	Greer Relief & Resources Agency, Inc.	Greer
Bellwether Non-Profit Advisors	Simpsonville	Habitat for Humanity Georgetown County	Georgetown
Black River United Way	Georgetown	Habitat for Humanity Greenville SC	Greenville
Callie and John Rainey Foundation	Anderson	Helping Hands of Georgetown	Georgetown
Carolina Business Equipment	Columbia	Home Works of America	Columbia
Carolina Human Reinvestment		Hope Remains Youth Ranch	Wellford
Catherine Jones Consulting		Increasing H.O.P.E Financial Training Center	North Charleston
ccbozard consulting	Columbia	Institute for Practical Theology	Columbia
Central Carolina Community Foundation	Columbia	International Primate Protection League	Summerville
Centre Stage-SC!	Greenville	Justice 360	Columbia
Charleston Stands	Charleston	Kingdom Kids Foundation	
Child Abuse Prevention Association	Port Royal	Lancaster County Council of the Arts	Lancaster
Children's Attention Home	Rock Hill	Lowcountry Food Bank	Charleston
Children's Museum of the Lowcountry	Charleston	Lowcountry Local First	Charleston
Children's Recovery Center	Georgetown	Martha W. Daniels Foundation	Camden
Church Street Historic Foundation	Camden	Miracle Hill Ministries	Greenville
Clemmons Thomas Consulting, LLC	Saint Stephen	NAMI Lowcountry	Hilton Head Island
Clover Area Assistance Center	Clover	National Royal Miss	Little River
Coastal Conservation League	Charleston	Neighbor to Neighbor of South Carolina	
Columbia Children's Theatre	Columbia	New Morning Foundation	Columbia
Columbia World Affairs Council	Columbia	North Charleston Pops!	North Charleston
Community Foundation of Greenville	Greenville	Pregnancy Center and Clinic of the Lowcountry	Hilton Head Island
Craig Farm Historic Preservation Society	Lancaster	Reid Lehman Consulting	Greenville
Dorchester Children's Center	Summerville	Second Helpings LC	Hilton Head Island
Eat Smart Move More SC	Columbia	South Carolina Afterschool Alliance	Columbia
Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center	Columbia		
Florence County Disabilities Foundation	Lake City		

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center	Columbia	Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development	Charleston	American Alliance of Museums
South Carolina Cancer Alliance	Columbia	American Association of Anatomists
South Carolina Christian Action Council	Columbia	American Association of Physics Teachers
South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council	Columbia	American Association of Teachers of German
St. Luke's Free Medical Clinic	Spartanburg	American Bladder Cancer Society
Still Hopes	West Columbia	American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine
Susan G. Komen Lowcountry	Charleston	American Brass Chamber Music Association
The Arc of South Carolina	Cayce	American Conference of Academic Deans
The Dream Center of Pickens County, Inc.	Easley	American Heart Association
The Early Learning Partnership of York County	Rock Hill	American Historical Association
The Gambrill Foundation	Anderson	American Jewish Committee
The Heart2Heart Foundation, Inc.	Rock Hill	American Medical Association Foundation
The Springs Close Foundation	Fort Mill	American Physiological Society
The Stringer Foundation	Anderson	American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.
The Upton Trio	Camden	American Red Cross
The Warehouse Theatre	Greenville	Americans for the Arts
The Weathers Group	Columbia	Americans Promoting Study Abroad
The Wellness Council for SC	Myrtle Beach	Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Together SC	Columbia	Amyloidosis Foundation
Trio Solutions Inc.	Mount Pleasant	Annie E. Casey Foundation
United Christian Ministries	Easley	Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
United Way Association of South Carolina	Columbia	Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
United Way of Greenville County	Greenville	Association of American Colleges and Universities
United Way of Oconee County, Inc.	Seneca	Association of Art Museum Directors
United Way of Sumter, Clarendon & Lee Counties	Sumter	Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel
United Way of the Midlands	Columbia	Association of Fundraising Professionals
Upstate SC Chapter of Americans United	Spartanburg	Association of Immunization Managers
Windwood Farm Home for Children, Inc.		Association of Nature Center Administrators
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network	Columbia	Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

**National Organizations**

Abila		Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.		Baptist Women in Ministry
AdoptAClassroom.org		Barr Foundation
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities		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
		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  
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
The Voter Participation Center

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**South Carolina**

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