The Honorable Henry R. Cuellar  
2209 Rayburn House Office Building  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  

Dear Representative Cuellar:

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,

| Texas | Arlington | Austin | Austin | Austin | Dallas | Dallas | Dallas | San Antonio | San Antonio | Austin | Austin | Dallas | Ennis | Eagle Lake Heights | Dallas | Fort Worth | Austin | Houston | McAllen | San Antonio | Stafford | Killeen | Fort Worth | Austin | Dallas | Duncanville | Galveston | Abilene | Denton | Sherman | Garland | San Angelo | Tyler |
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Habitat for Humanity of Williamson County, Texas, Inc.    Georgetown
Hardin-Simmons University Abilene
Hero Dogs, Inc. Grapevine
Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas San Antonio
House of Hope, Inc. Glenn Heights
Houston Children Give Back Houston
Houston Habitat for Humanity Austin
IT’S TIME TEXAS El Paso
Join Us For Justice, the El Paso Chapter of Americans United College Station
Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc. Austin and El Paso
Latinitas
Launch Pad Job Club Austin
LevelUp Institute Austin
Lions Club International Bellmead
Literacy Advance of Houston Fort Worth
Live Theatre League of Tarrant County Longview
Longview Habitat for Humanity, Inc. McKinney
Madeleine Crouch & Co., Inc. Dallas
Malone Law Firm Arlington
Midland Habitat for Humanity Midland
Mission Granbury Inc. McKinney
North Collin County Habitat for Humanity McKinney
One Voice Central Texas Austin
Oralia Lichtenberger Laredo
Pasadena Habitat for Humanity Pasadena
Pastors for Texas Children Fort Worth
Peace of Christ Church Round Rock
REACH Dallas
Resource Center Dallas
Rio Bravo Wildlife Institute Brownsville
SA Leadership Excel Academy San Antonio
San Antonio Lighthouse For The Blind San Antonio
Sewa International Houston
Sexual Assault Resource Center Bryan
Social Velocity Austin
South Main Baptist Church, Houston Houston
South Texas Literacy Coalition Edinburg
Standish Foundation for Child & Family Centered Healthcare Austin
State of Texas Alliance for Recycling

Swan Songs Austin
Taps ’n Tunes Productions, Inc. Hurst
Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations Houston
Texas Baptists Committed Allen
Texas One Voice d/b/a One Voice Texas Houston
Texoma Health Foundation Denison
The Arc of Fort Bend County Sugar Land
The Awty International School Houston
The Baby Stewart Foundation
The Fallen Linemen Organization Dallas
The Gleaning Network of Texas d/b/a GROW North Texas
The Montrose Center Houston
The WayWesX17 Homeless Project Fort Worth
Thousands Watching Houston
Trinity Center Austin
United Way of Greater Baytown Area & Chambers County Baytown
United Way of Greater Houston Houston
United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County Port Arthur
United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County San Antonio
Viper Nation Education Foundation Austin
Vision Weavers Consulting, LLC Humble
Vistage Group 3627 Houston
Volunteers of America Texas Arlington
Waco Habitat for Humanity Waco
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Austin Austin
Young Women’s Christian Association of San Antonio, TX San Antonio
YWCA of Lubbock Lubbock

National Organizations
Abila
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.
AdoptAClassroom.org
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
African Diaspora United, Inc.
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
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
Texas