

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017



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The Honorable Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

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,

3 Squares, Inc.		Comunidades Unidas	West Valley
Ability Found	West Valley		City
AFP-Utah Chapter	City	Conscious Community Collective	SLC
Aikido Mountain West	SLC	Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	
Allies with Families	MIDVALE	Daughters of Utah Pioneers	St. George
Alta Arts Council	SLC	McQuarrie Memorial Museum	
Alzheimer's & Dementia Society	St. George	Davis Arts Council	Layton
d/b/a Memory Matters Utah		Davis Performing Arts Association	Centerville
Amazing Earthfest	Kanab	DOVE Center	
American West Symphony and	Cottonwood	DSU Sears Art Museum	St. George
Chorus	Heights	Dual Immersion Academy	SLC
APORTA	SLC	Erin Kimball Memorial Foundation	Washington
Arctic Cares		Family Counseling Service of	Ogden
Art Access	SLC	Northern Utah	
Arts to Zion/ Southern Utah	Leeds	Family Support & Treatment Center	Orem
ASSIST, Inc.	SLC	Family Support Center	Taylorsville
Association for Utah Community	SLC	Fifth Press	SLC
Health		Flaks PR	Centerville
Association of Nature Center	Logan	Footsteps for Fertility Foundation	Draper
Administrators		Friends for Sight	SLC
Bad Dog Arts	SLC	Friends of Alta	Alta
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah		Friends of Festival Country K-9s	Cedar City
Bike Utah	SLC	Friends of the Moab Folk Festival	Moab
Build2Heal		Golden Rule Project	SLC
Camp Hobe' Inc.	SLC	Good Company Theatre	Ogden
Canyon Creek Women's Crisis Center	Cedar City	Granary Art Center	Ephraim
Casino Star Theatre Foundation	Mayfield	Grand Staircase Escalante Partners	Escalante
Catholic Community Services of Utah	SLC	Habitat for Humanity of Summit and	Park City
CCNS	SLC	Wasatch County	
Center for Awakening/One World	Midvale	Habitat for Humanity of Utah County	Orem
Humanity		Habitat for Humanity of Weber and	Ogden
Chamber Orchestra Ogden	Ogden	Davis Counties	
CHOICE Humanitarian	SLC	Halo	
Christian Center of Park City		HawkWatch International	SLC
Collegiate Bridges	SLC	Heart & Soul	SLC
Color Country Animal Welfare	Torrey	Heart Walk Foundation	St George
Color Country Community Radio	Torrey	Holladay Arts Council	
Columbus Community Center		Holy Cross Ministries	
Community Action Services and Food	Provo	Hooper Utah Team of Days for Girls	Hooper
Bank		International	
Community Development Corp. of	SLC	I.J. and Jeanne Wagner Jewish	SLC
Utah		Community Center	
Community Education Partnership of	West Valley	Intermountain Donor Services	SLC
West Valley City, Inc.	City	Intermountain Public Health	Sandy
		Consulting, LLC	

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Intermountain Specialized Abuse Treatment Center		Rural Housing Development Corporation DBA Self-Help Homes	Provo
Intermountain Therapy Animals	SLC	Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services	
Junior League of SLC	SLC	Salt Lake Film Society	SLC
Kids On The Move	Orem	Sandbox Theatre Company	
KPCW	Park City	Senior Charity Care Foundation	Layton
Latino Behavioral Health Services	SLC	Seven Canyons Trust	SLC
Life Rehabilitation International, Inc.	West Jordan	Shangó Music and Dance, d/b/a Samba Fogo	SLC
Lincoln Elementary School Community Learning Center	SLC	Share, Inc.	Ogden
Listeners Community Radio of Utah / 90.9 FM KRCL Radio	SLC	Smith's Food & Drug	SLC
Mentors International	Draper	SoJo Choral Arts	
Moab Music Festival	Moab	South Valley Services	West Jordan
Modern West Fine Art/ Sam and Diane Stewart Family Foundation	SLC	St. George Dinosaur Discovery Site at St. George Johnson Farm	
Mountain Arts and Music	Liberty	Sumi Nungwa	SLC
Mountain West Ballet	Sandy	Summit Community Counseling	Taylorsville
Music Theatre West	Providence	Tanner Dance Program	SLC
National Association of Health Data Organizations	SLC	Team Utah Snowboarding	SLC
National Tongan American Society	SLC	Thanksgiving Point	Lehi
Neighborhood House Association	SLC	The BBoy Federation	SLC
Neighborhood Housing Solutions	Logan	The Christmas Box International	SLC
New Hope Crisis Center of Box Elder County	Brigham City	The David Ross Fetzer Foundation for Emerging Artists	SLC
Nonprofit Legal Services of Utah	SLC	The Giving Principles	SLC
NOVA Chamber Music Series	SLC	The Grand Theatre	SLC
P3 Utah	SLC	The Green Urban Lunch Box	SLC
Pacific Island Knowledge 2 Action Resources	SLC	The Human Rights Education Center of Utah	SLC
Pam Anderson Insurance Agency	Murray	The INN Between	SLC
Park City Film Series	Park City	The King's English Bookshop	SLC
Park City Soccer Club	Park City	The Learning Center for Families	St. George
Pathway Associates	SLC	The Leonardo	
Peace House, Inc.	Park City	The Performer Studio	SLC
People Helping People	SLC	The SADS Foundation	SLC
Philanthropy Matters		The Sharing Place	SLC
Phillips Gallery	SLC	Third Sun Productions, Inc.	SLC
Pilar Pobil Legacy Foundation	SLC	Torrey House Press	SLC
Polizzi Foundation	SLC	Tracy Aviary	SLC
Preservation Utah	SLC	TreeUtah	SLC
Project Read	Provo	United Way of Northern Utah	Ogden
Pushing Ahead		United Way of Salt Lake	
Rape Recovery Center	SLC	Utah Afterschool Network	SLC
Recycle Utah	Park City	Utah Association for the Education of Young Children (UAEYC)	SLC
Repertory Dance Theatre	SLC	Utah Association of Health Underwriters	
Richard K. and Shirley S. Hemingway Foundation	SLC	Utah Avalanche Center	SLC
Rising Raptors After-school program	Sunnyside	Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault	SLC
Roads to Independence	Ogden	Utah Film Center	SLC

Utah Health Policy Project	SLC	Annie E. Casey Foundation
Utah Museum of Fine Arts	SLC	Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
Utah Museums Association		Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals
Utah Nonprofits Association	SLC	Association of American Colleges and Universities
Utah Partners for Health	Midvale	Association of Art Museum Directors
Utah Pioneer Heritage Arts	Murray	Association of Direct Response Fundraising Counsel
Utah Public Health Association		Association of Fundraising Professionals
Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness (USARA)	SLC	Association of Immunization Managers
Utahns Against Hunger VITA	SLC	Association of Nature Center Administrators
Volunteers of America, Utah	SLC	Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Wabi Sabi	Moab	Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Wasatch Adaptive Sports	Snowbird	Baptist Women in Ministry
Wasatch Community Gardens		Barr Foundation
Weber Human Services Foundation	Ogden	BoardSource
Weber Pathways	Ogden	Brady Campaign and Center to Prevent Gun Violence
West View Media	SLC	Camp Fire
YCC Family Crisis Center	Ogden	Campion Foundation
Youthlinc	SLC	Catholic Charities USA
YWCA Utah	SLC	Catholic Mobilizing Network

National Organizations

Abila		Center for Health, Environment & Justice
Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.		Center for Inquiry
AdoptAClassroom.org		Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities		Citizen Schools
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation		CleanSlateNow
American Alliance of Museums		Commonwealth Fund
American Association of Anatomists		Council on Foundations
American Association of Physics Teachers		Council for Global Equality
American Association of Teachers of German		Dance USA
American Bladder Cancer Society		Dementia Society, Inc.
American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine		Democracy 21
American Brass Chamber Music Association		Destination & Travel Foundation
American Conference of Academic Deans		Dietel Partners, LLC
American Heart Association		Disability Rights Advocacy Fund
American Historical Association		Ecology Project International
American Jewish Committee		Engineering Conferences International
American Medical Association Foundation		Feed the Children
American Physiological Society		Feeding America
American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.		Food & Water Watch
American Red Cross		Ford Foundation
Americans for the Arts		Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers
Americans Promoting Study Abroad		Free Press
Americans United for Separation of Church and State		Girl Scouts of the USA
Amyloidosis Foundation		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
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