

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017



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The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Chaffetz:

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.

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

Utah

April 5, 2017

Page 2

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

Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

Utah

April 5, 2017

Page 3

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

National Organizations

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