

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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,

**Washington Organizations**

501 Commons	Seattle	HomeFront Therapies	
Account for Your Health	Everett	Homes First	Olympia
ACS - Washington	Federal Way	Homeward Pet Adoption Center	
Advancement Consulting	Tacoma	HopeWorks Social Enterprises	Everett
AMIGAS DE CORAZON	Spokane	Inland Northwest Nonprofit Consulting	
Backbone Campaign	Vashon	Intermountain Impact Investments	Walla Walla
Bainbridge Chorale	Bainbridge Island	International Community Health Services	
Birch Consulting	Vancouver	Job Carr Cabin Museum	Tacoma
Blue Mountain Humane Society	Walla Walla	Josephine Caring Community in Stanwood WA	Mount Vernon
Brigid Collins Family Support Center	Bellingham	Key Peninsula Community Services	
Bullitt Foundation	Seattle	Kirkpatrick Family Foundation	Seattle
Campion Foundation	Seattle	Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity	Ellensburg
Cedarmere Foundation	Seattle	KMRE Community Radio	Bellingham
Center for Justice	Spokane	Knitting Humanity Together	Kent
Child Care Aware of WA	Tacoma	Kulshan Community Land Trust	Bellingham
CIS		Laura Pierce Consulting	Seattle
Clallam Mosaic	Port Angeles	League of Women Voters of Washington	Seattle
COMIA Foundation	Cheney	Leahy Consulting	Sammamish
Danza Classica Ballet Foundation	Walla Walla	Legal Voice	Seattle
Faith Action Network	Seattle	Lewis County Literacy Council	Centralia
Flight Club Foundation	Auburn	Master Gardener Foundation of Benton Franklin County	Richland
Forest and Sequoia Foundations	Tacoma	Meade B Thayer LLC	Seattle
Foundation for Healthy Generations	Seattle	Mount Vernon Downtown Association	Mount Vernon
Freedom Project	Kirkland	NAMI Washington	Seattle
FUND MOMENTUM, LLC	Seattle	Native Arts and Cultures Foundation	
Furry Friends	Vancouver	Nature 4 All	Maple Valley
Grace Baptist Church	University Place	Nexus Youth and Families	Auburn
Granite Falls Community Coalition Food Bank	Granite Falls	Nonprofit Performance Partners, LLC	
Greater Gig Harbor Foundation	Gig Harbor	North Cascades Conservation Council	
Habitat for Humanity - Colville Valley Partners	Colville	Northwest Children's Fund NPO	Kirkland
Habitat for Humanity of Washington State	Tacoma	NW Children's Fund	Seattle
Habitat for Humanity - Spokane	Spokane	One Equal Heart Foundation	Seattle
Health and Hope Medical Outreach	Centralia		
Healthy Youth Alliance			
Heartlinks Hospice & Palliative Care	Sunnyside		

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Orcas Island Community Foundation	Eastsound	The Successful Transition and Reentry (STAR) Project	Walla Walla
Orting Food Bank	Orting	Treehouse	Seattle
Our Literacy Council of Lewis County	Centralia	Turning Pointe Domestic Violence Services	Shelton
Philanthropy Northwest	Seattle	USA Softball of Washington State	Vancouver
Phoenix Conservancy	Pullman	Valley Community Center	Clarkston
Powerful Voices		Vision for Independence Center	
Pride Foundation	Seattle	Waitsburg Historical Society	Waitsburg
Psychotherapy Cooperative	Seattle	Walla Walla YWCA	
Race to Remember	Vancouver	Washington Apple Education Foundation	Wenatchee
Rebuilding Together South Sound	Tacoma	Washington Nonprofits	Seattle
Sahsen Foundation		Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility	Seattle
Satterberg Foundation	Seattle	Washington State Nurses Foundation	
Schools for Salone		Washington Statewide Capacity Collaborative	
Scout Finch Consulting	Seattle	Wenatchee Valley Humane Society	Wenatchee
Seattle Arts & Lectures	Seattle	Whatcom Community Foundation	Bellingham
Seattle Foundation	Seattle	WhiteRock Consulting Group	Pullman
Seattle Works	Seattle	Whitman County Humane Society	Pullman
Shelter Bay Chorus	La Conner	YWCA Clark County	Vancouver
Sherwood Trust	Walla Walla	YWCA of Spokane	Spokane
Skagit Community Foundation	Mount Vernon	YWCA Olympia	Olympia
Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group	Mount Vernon	YWCA Seattle   King   Snohomish	
Skagit Habitat for Humanity	Mount Vernon		
Sno-Valley Senior Center	Carnation		
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	University Place		
Sound Generations	Seattle		
Southwest Spokane County Historical Society	Cheney		
Southwest Youth and Family Services	Seattle		
Spokane Area Jewish Family Services	Spokane		
Spokane Sports Commission			
Support Services for the Developmentally Disabled			
Temple Beth Am	Seattle		
Terrain Programs	Spokane		
The Boiler Room	Port Townsend		
The Museum of Flight	Seattle		
The Mustard Seed Project of Key Peninsula	Vaughn		
The Olympic Beacon Group	Copalis Crossing		
The Peg and Rick Young Foundation	Seattle		
The Russell Family Foundation	Gig Harbor		

**National Organizations**

- Abila
- Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.
- AdoptAClassroom.org
- Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
- American Alliance of Museums
- American Association of Anatomists
- American Association of Physics Teachers
- American Association of Teachers of German
- 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  
Annie E. Casey Foundation  
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  
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

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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