

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We the undersigned national organizations urge you in the strongest terms to oppose any and all efforts to repeal or alter the campaign intervention ban that protects 501(c)(3) organizations including religious organizations and charities.

Recently at the National Prayer Breakfast, you promised to “totally destroy the Johnson Amendment,” which is the provision in the tax code that prohibits public charities and private foundations from intervening in elections by endorsing or opposing political candidates or parties. In addition, three bills that would weaken current law— H.R. 172, H.R. 781, and S. 264—have been introduced in Congress. Existing protections preserve the integrity of houses of worship, our elections, and the tax code. Accordingly, we urge you to oppose any efforts to repeal or weaken the safeguards in current law.

For more than 60 years, this rule barring campaign intervention has helped keep tax-deductible money out of partisan politics. It has helped maintain the integrity and autonomy of our religious and charitable sectors and preserve the boundary separating church and state. It has guaranteed that Americans’ charitable giving will not be channeled into political campaigns. For those reasons, the current law is overwhelmingly supported by the public.

Without this rule, nonpartisan charities and places of worship would be open to manipulation for political ends. Up to now, charities and religious organizations have been insulated from electioneering, and instead have been committed to doing good work, like alleviating poverty, ministering to the spirit, curing disease, and addressing other basic human and social needs. Changing the law jeopardizes the public’s confidence that their charitable contributions would be used for these universally valued purposes rather than mere partisan politics. Partisan groups would have incentives to use charities and congregations as a conduit to spend secret money to influence elections, and some may pressure nonprofits to make endorsements and contributions. This pressure may be particularly acute if the organization accepts or is associated with groups that accept government money.

Politicizing the charitable sector harms our communities and our relationship with the public. We urge you to reject any attempt to remove the campaign intervention ban which protects our charitable and religious sectors from being used for political purposes.

Sincerely,

Action on Smoking and Health  
Alliance for a Better Utah  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Atheists

American Family Voices  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Humanist Association  
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc.  
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Bohio Atabey, Grandmothers Council  
Catholics for Choice  
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good  
Center for Inquiry  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
Common Cause  
ConnectiCOSH  
Corporate Accountability International  
Council on Foundations  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
Democracy 21  
End Citizens United  
Every Voice  
Faith in Public Life  
Faith Voices Arkansas  
Faithful America  
Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.  
Food & Water Watch  
Franciscan Action Network  
Free Press Action Fund  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of the Earth  
Health Equity & Strategic Effectiveness  
Hindu American Foundation  
Human Rights Campaign  
Independent Sector  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Interfaith Alliance  
Jubilee East Bay  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Marion's Corner  
MassCOSH- Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health  
Minnesota Voice  
Money Out Voters In (MOVI)

National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)  
National Consumers League  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Priorities Project  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy  
New Ways Ministry  
Patriotic Millionaires  
People For the American Way  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Project Vote  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice Center  
Public Law Center  
Religious Institute  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Rural Development Leadership Network  
Senate Select Community Committee on California's Correctional System  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Small Planet Institute  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
The Voter Participation Center  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
Vermont Political Revolution Corporation  
Voices for Progress  
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Cc: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, and Members of Congress