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March 3, 2017

Dear Members of Congress,

California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits) strongly opposes proposals that would politicize the charitable nonprofit and philanthropic community by repealing or weakening current federal tax law protections (sometimes called the Johnson Amendment) that prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates.

CalNonprofits, a statewide policy alliance of more than 10,000 organizations, is the voice for California's nonprofit community. Through our advocacy work, we protect and enhance the ability of California's nonprofits to serve our state, the nation and the world.

We are concerned because having nonprofits — including churches and congregations — engage in electioneering would confuse the public about the charitable, nonpartisan role of nonprofits. It would allow individuals to pass their political contributions through nonprofits and obtain tax deductions for supporting a political party (currently donations to political parties are not tax-deductible). Nonprofits could be pressured by donors to abandon nonpartisanship and endorse candidates for political offices. Nonprofits could lose our legal and actual stance as benefiting the public, not someone running for office.

We nonprofits are trusted in part because we are resolutely nonpartisan. Those who support our work rely on us to use their donations to help our communities, not engage in electioneering. These proposals would benefit politicians and paid political operatives, not the people and communities we exist as nonprofits to serve.

We appreciate your consideration. If you have any questions about this or would like to discuss our concerns in further detail, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,



Jan Masaoka
CEO