The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways & Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal:

CC: Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

As Congress debates comprehensive tax reform, we urge you to oppose proposals that could politicize charitable nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. Specifically, we ask you to protect current federal tax provisions that prohibit tax-exempt organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates. This longstanding protection, better known as the Johnson Amendment, has served as an important legal precedent separating charitable organizations from electoral politics.

Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has ensured that tax-exempt organizations, including charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations do not endorse or oppose political candidates. It protects the right of these organizations to discuss political and social issues while, at the same time, ensuring they are not pressured by political candidates, campaigns, and donors to take a side in divisive partisan elections. It is widely supported by religious organizations and denominations, faith leaders, secular nonprofits, and the overwhelming majority of Americans. In fact, in August 2017, more than 4,000 faith leaders sent a letter to all Members of Congress strongly opposing any efforts to weaken or repeal the Johnson Amendment. Similarly, in September, more than 5,500 organizations from all 50 states wrote each of us expressing opposition to any changes to the Johnson Amendment.

This policy has successfully shielded our nation’s charitable community against the rancor of partisan politics and allowed them to freely address humanitarian, social, and community-specific problems in a nonpartisan manner. Americans do not want our houses of worship, charitable nonprofits, and foundations to become points of leverage for partisan politics. Nor do they want tax-exempt, charitable contributions to be funneled into political campaigns.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to ensure that any tax reform package retains the Johnson Amendment without modification. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Assistant Democratic Leader  
James E. Clyburn  
Member of Congress  

John Lewis  
Member of Congress  

Printed on Recycled Paper
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Beto O’Rourke
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Lloyd Doggett
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Earl Blumenauer
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Brian Higgins
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Elizabeth H. Esty
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Juan Vargas  
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Adriano Espaillat  
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Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady  
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Yvette D. Clarke  
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Jim Costa  
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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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David E. Price  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

Adam Schiff  
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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutiérrez  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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John Conyers, Jr.  
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Emmanuel Cleaver, II  
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Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress
John Garamendi
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John Sarbanes
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Ted Deutch
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Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
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Gene Green
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Daniel W. Lipinski
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Al Green
Member of Congress