Nonpartisanship protects the integrity and independence of charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations. Longstanding tax law, sometimes called the **Johnson Amendment**, shields the entire 501(c)(3) community from the rancor of partisan politics and enables individuals of all beliefs to come together to solve community problems free from partisan divisions. The broad charitable nonprofit and foundation communities are united in calling on Congress to oppose any effort to repeal or weaken the Johnson Amendment.

**The Issue:** Proposals in Congress would repeal or significantly weaken the final clause of Section 501(c)(3) (the Johnson Amendment), which provides that in exchange for tax-exempt status and the ability to receive tax-deductible contributions, a charitable nonprofit, religious organization, or foundation may “not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.” For 60+ years, this provision has been a valuable protection that keeps charitable nonprofits, religious institutions, and foundations focused on their missions rather than diverting their time, money, and other resources to engage in partisan electioneering.

**The Consequences:** If enacted the legislative proposals would politicize charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations, hurting the public and damaging the capacity of organizations in a wide variety of ways, including these:

- Erosion of public trust as organizations become known as Democratic charities or Republican charities.
- Diversion from mission as 501(c)(3) organizations are pressured to redirect resources (money, staff time, facilities, member lists -- as well as their brand value and good will) to partisan political campaigns.
- Donors “buying” endorsements from charitable organizations for favored candidates for public office.
- Cost to taxpayers ($2.1 billion per the Joint Committee on Taxation) when partisan donors claim charitable tax deductions, for the first time, for donations to newly politicized “charitable” organizations.
- Cost to Democracy as money is diverted from publicly disclosed candidate committees and PACs and given to unregulated and undisclosed entities that emerge shortly before elections (think pop-up charities and churches).

**The Proposed Change Is Not Needed:** Nonprofits – and their individual leaders – already have tremendous free speech protections and opportunities under existing law. Charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations are allowed to advocate on policy issues relevant to their missions and the people they serve. Religious leaders can legally preach on moral and policy issues such as abortion, immigration, social justice, and religious liberty. In their personal capacity, nonprofit board members, volunteers, and staff – including clergy – can be as partisan as they want to be, make campaign contributions, and even run for office. They just cannot carry out these partisan activities on behalf of the 501(c)(3) organizations with which they are associated.

**What the Public Thinks:** The majority of Americans believe that 501(c)(3) organizations should remain dedicated to the public good and stay away from raw partisan politics:

- A poll conducted in March 2017 found that nearly three out of four American voters (72 percent) want to keep current rules protecting 501(c)(3) organizations from partisan political activity. A separate survey conducted in February of that year by the National Association of Evangelicals found that 89 percent of pastors oppose the idea of clergy mixing partisan politics and religion by endorsing candidates from the pulpit.
- Our nation’s top charities law enforcement officials have called on Congress not to weaken the Johnson Amendment, stressing that, “electioneering is not considered a charitable purpose under common law, and many state charities regulators would consider expenditure of charitable funds on such purposes to be inappropriate, possibly illegal.”
- More than 100 national and state religious and denominational organizations signed a letter to Congress stressing: “People of faith do not want partisan political fights infiltrating their houses of worship.” Similarly, more than 4,500 religious leaders have signed a letter declaring they are “strongly opposed to any effort to repeal or weaken current law that protects houses of worship from becoming centers of partisan politics.”
- More than 5,800 charitable, religious, and philanthropic organizations from all 50 states have signed the Community Letter in Support of Nonprofit Nonpartisan-ship, demonstrating strong opposition to proposals to politicize our community.

(See links to all of the above at [www.GiveVoice.org](http://www.GiveVoice.org).)

**The Ask:** Will you oppose efforts to repeal or weaken the Johnson Amendment?

Learn more about the nonprofit sector’s impact in Kansas and Missouri at [www.npconnect.org](http://www.npconnect.org).