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,

James E. Clyburn  
Assistant Democratic Leader  
Member of Congress

John Lewis  
Member of Congress
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress

James Raskin
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Member of Congress

Ami Bera
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal Allard  
Member of Congress

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