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## **Nonprofits to Newhouse, Herrera Beutler, Kilmer: Stand with Nonprofits, WA Legislature Against Dark Money in Politics**

SEATTLE, WA- Washington Nonprofits, Washington State's nonprofit association, called on U.S. Representatives Dan Newhouse, Jaime Herrera Beutler, and Derek Kilmer to protect charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations by removing language at section 112 of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill that would harm the integrity of nonprofits serving throughout Washington by permitting tens of millions of dollars in suddenly tax-deductible dark money to flood through houses of worship to influence elections and all levels of government. This provision would weaken enforcement of the longstanding Johnson Amendment, a part of the Internal Revenue Code that protects houses of worship and other nonprofit organizations from the rancor of partisanship by prohibiting them from endorsing, opposing, or spending any of their charitable assets for or against candidates for public office.

"Representatives Newhouse, Herrera Beutler, and Kilmer have an opportunity to protect taxpayers and the integrity of the nonprofit sector by using his position on the House Appropriations Committee to strike a harmful policy rider contained in the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill that would prohibit the IRS from enforcing the Johnson Amendment," said Washington Nonprofits Executive Director Laura Pierce. "The Johnson Amendment is a longstanding federal tax law that requires tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to be nonpartisan. Charitable, religious, and philanthropic organizations in Washington State and across the country have united to tell Congress not to tamper with the Johnson Amendment, which has proven to be successful and vital for more than 60 years. Weakening the Johnson Amendment would be a major mistake. The law is a vital shield that allows nonprofits to focus on their missions instead of diverting their time or charitable resources to support or oppose candidates for public office."

“Weakening the Johnson Amendment would fly in the face of the new Washington State DISCLOSE Act by potentially unleashing a flood of dark money into our country’s free elections, and worse – create an incentive for the wealthy to do so by making political donations tax-deductible,” said Washington Nonprofits Director of Public Policy and Advocacy David Streeter. “The state’s DISCLOSE Act is intended to ensure accountability and transparency in our elections. Unfortunately, if the Johnson Amendment is weakened, savvy political donors are likely to misuse the nonprofit sector by making contributions to houses of worship for partisan political purposes in order to receive a tax deduction and keep their gifts confidential instead of donating to political organizations that are not tax-deductible and require disclosure. This would erode the public’s trust in nonprofit organizations and ultimately harm the people that nonprofits serve. Washington Nonprofits hopes that Representatives Newhouse, Herrera Beutler, and Kilmer will use their key positions to stand with the agencies that serve their constituents by striking section 112 of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill.”

Please contact Washington Nonprofits for additional comment on the Johnson Amendment and the DISCLOSE Act.

#### ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- [Protecting the Johnson Amendment and Nonprofit Nonpartisanship](#)
- [Washington State Community Letter in support of Nonpartisanship](#) signed by Washington Nonprofits, Philanthropy Northwest, and more than xxx organizations across Washington State
- [National Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship](#) signed by more than 5,800 organizations, from all 50 states, including Washington Nonprofits
- Letter opposing the change signed by more than [100 denominations and major religious organizations](#) (not a single denomination supports the proposal to politicize houses of worship)
- [Faith Voices letter](#) opposing the change signed by more than 4,500 faith leaders from various denominations
- A 2017 poll by the National Association of Evangelicals revealing that [89 percent of evangelical pastors](#) say it is wrong for preachers to endorse candidates from the pulpit
- Letter from [state law enforcement officials](#) from across the country who oppose weakening the Johnson Amendment
- [Trump vowed to destroy the Johnson Amendment. Thankfully, he has failed.](#) By David Saperstein, Director Emeritus, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, and Amanda Tyler, Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, in *Washington Post*, February 8, 2018
- [There’s a wolf in sheep’s clothing hiding in the GOP tax bill.](#) By Amanda Tyler, Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, and Tim Delaney, President and CEO, National Council of Nonprofits, in *The Hill*, November 8, 2017

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As the state association for all nonprofits, Washington Nonprofits makes sure that nonprofits across the state of Washington have what they need to succeed. Washington Nonprofits delivers on our mission through three main, integrated initiatives: learning programs, public policy, and engagement. Washington Nonprofits continues to be inspired by our belief that nonprofits represent our democracy in action as people come together to make a difference. To learn more about Washington Nonprofits, visit our website at [www.washingtonnonprofits.org](http://www.washingtonnonprofits.org) or call (855) 299-2922.