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Nonprofit, Foundation Leaders Oppose Ban of Amendments to Remove anti-Johnson Amendment Rider from Appropriations Bill

Washington, DC - The House Rules Committee approved a rule for consideration of the Financial Services and Interior/Environment “mini-bus” appropriations bill (H.R. 6147) that refuses to allow debate or action to remove a disingenuous provision that elevates partisan politics over nonprofit missions and undermines effective community problem-solving. The inappropriate rider would undermine the longstanding [Johnson Amendment](#), the provision of federal tax law that protects charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations from demands from politicians and others for endorsements and other support. The provision would effectively block the IRS from enforcing the Johnson Amendment when “churches” violate the law in even the most egregious ways, such as diverting charitable assets to influence partisan political campaigns. Yet the Rules Committee refused to allow action on the House floor to touch the provision, buried in Section 112 of the Financial Services title of the Financial Services and Interior/Environment “mini-bus” appropriations bill.

Once again, a caustically partisan rider is gliding through the House of Representatives – the so-called “people’s House” – without regard to what the people want. Inclusion of the anti-Johnson Amendment language ignores the will of the [vast majority of Americans](#) who favor keeping the law in place, as well as the nearly [90 percent of evangelical pastors](#) who say it is wrong to endorse candidates from the pulpit. Additionally, more than [4,500 faith leaders have signed a letter](#) calling on Congress to keep partisan politics out of their houses of worship, and [100+ denominations and major religious organizations](#) have similarly called for the Johnson Amendment to remain untouched – with not a single denomination coming out in favor of these proposals to weaken it. That’s to say nothing of the more than 5,800 charitable, religious, and philanthropic organizations that have signed the [Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship](#), and have made clear they don’t want the goodwill they have built up by serving people in communities across the country to be destroyed by toxic partisanship. [State law enforcement officials](#) who regulate nonprofits also have warned Congress not to tamper with the Johnson Amendment, because doing so “would be bad policy” and inhibit their ability to protect the public and charitable assets against fraud and abuse.

Leaders representing organizations across the charitable, religious, and philanthropic world added:

[Gene Cochrane](#), Interim President and CEO, [Council on Foundations](#)

“Foundations are non-partisan, non-political organizations that exist to serve people and uplift the communities that they live in. That is our role and that is our calling. There is no shortage of opportunities in this country for those that wish to engage in electoral politics, but there is also no reason that they should do so through tax exempt organizations.”

[Daniel J. Cardinali](#), President and CEO, [Independent Sector](#)

“The Johnson Amendment serves as a critical firewall between political activity and nonprofit organizations. Gutting this firewall would tear nonprofits away from their missions, erode public trust in the sector, and help political donors dodge taxes at the expense of the federal treasury.”

[Tim Delaney](#), President and CEO, [National Council of Nonprofits](#):

“Unfortunately, this self-serving provision is more of the same from our elected officials. They refuse to recognize the extent of destruction that weakening the

Johnson Amendment would wreak upon the work of nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations – or they simply don’t care, as long as it enriches their campaign coffers. I’d say that this is a solution in search of a problem, but this isn’t a solution to anything and creates new avenues for abuse and corruption.”

Lee Sherman, President and CEO, National Human Services Assembly:

“The Johnson Amendment allows nonprofits to cultivate public trust in the sector’s public services, facilitate cross-sector collaboration, and offer bipartisan solutions that are core to our missions and the development of well-being in our communities.”

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An active philanthropic network, the [Council on Foundations](#), founded in 1949, is a nonprofit leadership association of grantmaking foundations and corporations. It provides the opportunity, leadership, and tools needed by philanthropic organizations to expand, enhance and sustain their ability to advance the common good. With members from all foundation types and sizes, the Council empowers professionals in philanthropy to meet today’s toughest challenges and advances a culture of charitable giving in the U.S. and globally.

[Independent Sector](#) is the only national membership organization that brings together a diverse set of nonprofits, foundations, and corporations to advance the common good.

The [National Council of Nonprofits](#) (Council of Nonprofits) is a trusted resource and proven advocate for America’s charitable nonprofits. Connecting the policy dots across all levels and branches of governments, the Council of Nonprofits keeps nonprofits informed and empowered to create a positive public policy environment that best supports nonprofits in advancing their missions. Working with and through the nation’s largest network of nonprofits – with 25,000-plus organizational members – we identify emerging trends, share proven practices, and promote solutions that benefit charitable nonprofits and the communities they serve.

[National Human Services Assembly](#) is a Washington, D.C.-based association comprised of some of the largest national nonprofit human service organizations. National Assembly's mission is to strengthen human services in the United States

through the active involvement and leadership of its members, envisioning a nation that seriously and effectively addresses the human service needs of its citizens.