NYCON Members, below is a model letter in support of the Johnson Amendment Bill that your organization can use to show your support.

** On Agency Letterhead **

Date
Legislator Name
Room # Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248 (Assembly) 12247 (Senate)
Dear Senator/Assemblymember X:

I’m writing in support of S.8366 (Ranzenhofer)/A.10354 (Paulin).

This legislation would amend section 204 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law to provide that a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

By enacting this bill into law, New York would create state-level protections that are currently outlined in the federal “Johnson Amendment” to the Internal Revenue Service Code, prohibiting nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations from endorsing political candidates or becoming monetarily or otherwise involved in election campaigns. The Johnson Amendment has been in place since 1954, and is designed to protect these nonprofits from using their resources or becoming mired in partisan politics.

Recently there have been federal efforts to repeal or as an alternative, substantially erode, this invaluable legislative protection. I urge the Senate and Assembly to codify this important protection into New York law, so the Office of the Attorney General can ensure that our state’s 501(c)(3) organizations do not get involved in electioneering activities.

Nonprofit organizations, which have charitable, religious and educational missions, serve a public purpose. Allowing nonprofits to participate in partisan politics will undoubtedly undermine the public’s trust in them, and opens the door for donations and influence to become tools for political manipulation. Without the protection provided by the Johnson Amendment and this bill, political campaign dollars could be funneled through 501(c)(3) organizations, rendering them tax-deductible. This would result in skewed political campaign reporting, while also dividing the nonprofit sector among partisan lines and damaging the reputation of all involved.

Partisan politics have no place in the tax-exempt 501(c)(3) sector. Codifying the Johnson Amendment through S.8366/A.10354 will ensure that New York nonprofit corporations do not engage in political activity, regardless of what may happen in Congress.

I urge you to co-sponsor and vote in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Name
Title