



THE NONPROFIT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
OREGON

*Good works. Together.*

February 28, 2013

The Honorable Dave Camp, Chairman  
Ways and Means Committee  
US House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Support for preservation of the charitable deduction**

Dear Chairman Camp:

The Nonprofit Association of Oregon (NAO) is the statewide association of nonprofits in Oregon. We represent over six hundred member nonprofits of all sizes and missions from across the state. On February 14, the National Council of Nonprofits (NCN) and other esteemed nonprofit organizations presented testimony regarding tax reform and the charitable giving incentive to the Congressional House Ways and Means Committee. We support preserving the charitable deduction for individuals so that charitable contributions can continue to support the vital programs and services on which Oregon, and American, communities rely.

The work of nonprofit organizations throughout the United States, and especially here in Oregon, strengthens communities and the economy, and lightens the burdens of government, taxpayers, and society as a whole. Nonprofits employ more than 166,000 Oregonians (representing 13% of the private workforce) and contribute more than 5% to the Gross Domestic Product of the United States. In local communities across Oregon and America, nonprofits deliver essential services, enhance the quality of life, and uplift the spirit of faith, innovation, and inspiration.

The House Ways and Means Committee will undoubtedly be considering cuts in federal spending and reforms to tax laws and entitlement programs. Those changes could undermine the ability of nonprofits to maintain—and expand—much needed programs and services, especially with the increased demands resulting from the still anemic economy and policy choices being made at all levels of government. Under these conditions, nonprofits may not merely be the next place for people in need to turn; we are likely their only place to turn. Charitable nonprofits across Oregon must be able to count on the current tax incentives for charitable giving if the expectation of policymakers is that nonprofit organizations will be there to fill the gaps.

In support of our argument, we offer the following testimonials from Oregon nonprofits:

"Nonprofits need all the incentives for donations . . . We hope to continue with Meals on Wheels and be a place that the seniors and the community can come to socialize and be as one. Without the donations, we will be no more."

Beth Savage, Executive Director  
*Clatskanie Senior Citizens, Inc.*, Clatskanie, OR

"The Dental Foundation of Oregon provides direct services to thousands of low-income children in Oregon every year, and we support nonprofit dental clinics throughout the state that help many more people who can't help themselves. We rely on the charitable contributions of thousands of generous companies and individuals, and creating any disincentive to charitable contributions will dangerously impact our funding and our ability to serve Oregon's most vulnerable children."

Charlie LaTourette, Executive Director  
*The Dental Foundation of Oregon*, Wilsonville, OR

"The ability to generate support from our community is critical to the well-being of our organization, especially in light of reduced government support of our programs and services."

Ken Fosheim, Chief Executive Officer  
*Exceed Enterprises*, Milwaukie, OR

"When government budgets for essential social services were cut, the answer was 'the private sector' will pick it up. Today nonprofit organizations (501(c)(3) under the tax code) provide the ONLY social services in our neighborhoods. Please don't cut our budgets also. Continue to provide the incentive of tax credits for contributions to nonprofits."

John Haines, Executive Director  
*Mercy Corps Northwest*, Portland, OR

"As our country begins to rely on nonprofits more and more, it is imperative that this incentive remain in place. How will we help everyone in need if we have no way to raise funds?"

Claire Seguin, Executive Director  
*Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO)*, Springfield, OR

"Oregon Food Bank (OFB) relies heavily on federal charitable giving incentives as tens of thousands of Oregonians contribute to our efforts to end hunger each year. More than half of OFB's annual revenue comes from the generosity of individual donors and we know that many, many of these donors rely on federal charitable giving incentives to deepen their support of food banking activities. In fact, in an average year OFB will send about 70,000 thank-you letters, along with receipts for contributions, to individuals who contribute to our organization . . . We simply cannot afford any disincentive from

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Congress that would negatively impact the financial support we receive from so many Oregonians.”

Susannah Morgan, Chief Executive Officer  
*Oregon Food Bank, Portland, OR*

“We at the nonprofit Regional Arts & Culture Council see the benefit of charitable giving every day. We shepherd public funds to dozens and dozens of arts organizations who provide a wide range of experiences from the most magnificent symphony to heart-warming performances by adults and young people with developmental challenges. We fund scrappy theater companies and the Portland Art Museum. We support bilingual plays and African dance for young people . . . But the money we grant them is at best 5% of these organizations’ budgets. Ticket sales cover half the costs of a performance, so the full experience is possible because of individual philanthropy both modest and generous. We know that charitable giving – no matter what the cause – encourages people to open their wallets as best they can. The richness of our lives, the health of our citizens, the full education of our children, the bridging of cultural differences, the health of our environment, the celebration of being human – all are to be celebrated and encouraged through charitable giving.”

Eloise Damrosch, Executive Director  
*Regional Arts & Cultural Council, Portland, OR*

It is imperative that the Committee reject all proposals to reduce or cap the value of itemized deductions for charitable contributions. Such changes threaten the ability of nonprofit organizations to serve those most in need and to continue to strengthen our communities.

Sincerely,



James White, Executive Director  
*Nonprofit Association of Oregon*