



June 17, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

As Congress begins the important work of crafting comprehensive healthcare reform legislation this month, the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning urges you to reject any proposal that would offset the cost of this legislation at the expense of our nation's charities.

While we applaud the desire of President Obama and Congressional leaders to address the healthcare crisis in this country in a fiscally responsible manner, the Partnership strongly opposes any proposal that would limit the tax rate for the charitable deduction. Specifically, the Partnership opposes the current White House budget plan to cap itemized deductions at 28 percent for taxpayers earning more than \$250,000 a year as a means of paying for healthcare reform.

The Partnership certainly supports the idea of asking those with the most wealth to shoulder a greater responsibility for rebuilding an economy that, in many cases, provided the environment for generating this wealth in the first place. As such, we believe philanthropy is one of the best tools for accomplishing this end, and the federal government must continue to support philanthropy. Tax incentives for charitable giving send an essential message about the value our society places on voluntary giving and the important role of charitable organizations in meeting critical individual and community needs. The true beneficiaries of the charitable donation are not the generous Americans who make charitable gifts, but all citizens whose local communities, nation, and world are made better through the work of charitable organizations. Americans do not make charitable gifts for tax reasons, but tax incentives do encourage more giving and make bigger gifts possible. Tax incentives for charitable giving send a message that helping others is a core value to be encouraged. The charitable deduction is not a matter of providing a reward or something of value to the taxpayer; rather it is a matter of encouraging those with financial means to use their wealth to help those without. This voluntary redistribution of wealth is a cornerstone of America's philanthropic heritage.

As healthcare reform legislation begins to move through Congress, the Partnership looks forward to working with you to ensure the federal government continues to provide strong incentives for generous Americans who want to help others, especially during this difficult economic time.

Sincerely,

Tanya Howe Johnson
President and CEO