

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Don Beyer
United States House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Beyer,

We write to you as the CEOs of six major private charities that are headquartered in your Congressional District. We represent some of the best known and well-respected charities in the world. We include three of the ten largest charities in the United States. Cumulatively, we raise well in excess of \$7 billion in private donations every year. More importantly, we improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans every year. We provide help to the neediest and most vulnerable among us and touch the lives of millions of people who are struggling, including many who need help because of the current pandemic and ensuing economic crisis in our country.

Our organizations work closely with all levels of government, supporting and executing government funded programs and taking part in public-private partnerships. We understand the government can't do it alone. We are able to use private donations to help people efficiently, flexibly, and quickly. We appreciate that you personally and actively support local charities in Alexandria and some of our organizations.

Because of today's Joint Economic Committee hearing, we want to bring to your attention a key tool to raise private donations, the charitable tax deduction. The deduction has existed since the modern federal tax law was implemented in 1917 because of the concern that the new income tax would discourage charitable giving. Currently, only the 10% of taxpayers who itemize their taxes are eligible to take a charitable deduction. Therefore, the vast majority of Americans who make donations have to pay taxes on those donations. We do not believe that is fair to low and middle income donors who are making real financial sacrifices to donate to our organizations and who comprise our largest group of givers. Few of our donors are giving to charity so they can take a tax deduction; they are giving because they believe in our work and missions. A universal charitable deduction would allow current donors to give more, and it would incentivize a larger group of people to contribute.

We deeply appreciate that Congress chose to enact a 1-year \$300 non-itemizer charitable deduction as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act -- that is a good start. However, there is a bi-partisan movement to significantly expand that deduction right now. We know you are well aware of that movement because of today's hearing in the Joint Economic Committee, of which you are Vice-chair.

We urge you to use this hearing as an opportunity to come out in support of a robust non-itemizer charitable deduction. The ideal long-term solution would be along the lines of Congressman Danny Davis' (D-IL) bill, H.R.1260, or other bipartisan bills introduced in the House. The Senate approach, bi-partisan legislation to be introduced by JEC Chairman Lee and Senators Klobuchar, Lankford, Coons, Tim Scott, and Shaheen would also significantly increase charitable giving. A broad non-itemizer charitable deduction in most any form is something of which we are supportive and would bolster our organizations as we work to help our country recover.

We urge you to support us by sponsoring or cosponsoring legislation to significantly expand the charitable deduction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA

Stacey D. Stewart
President and CEO
March of Dimes

Ellie Hollander
President and CEO
Meals on Wheels America

David Hudson
National Commander
The Salvation Army USA

Brian A. Gallagher
President and CEO
United Way Worldwide

Mike King
President and CEO
Volunteers of America