**Drastic Times Call for Thoughtful Measures**

By [INSERT NAME OF AUTHOR]

We live in challenging times that require a constant source of ideas and solutions, particularly as federal lawmakers seek to streamline the tax code, raise revenue, and reduce the budget deficit. As a [nonprofit/philanthropic leader] who/that is on the frontlines providing critical services to our community, we know this is not a time for political expedience. We need a thorough and honest analysis of the consequences of tax policy.

Tax and budget decisions in Washington, D.C. have cascading consequences for our communities. For example, some proposed tax policy changes would hurt philanthropy’s ability to effectively serve communities, which would be disastrous for our nonprofits and the millions who rely on the generosity of donors at all income levels.

Simply put, thriving philanthropy equals thriving communities.Philanthropy is at work every day to help provide a path to success for millions. Unlike government and for-profit entities, philanthropy has the unique ability to combine resources, respond to emerging needs, and deliver innovative solutions and results.

Nonprofits – which are supported largely through charitable giving – generate more than $1 trillion every year through jobs and services. And at time when our country’s economy desperately needs it, nonprofits employ 1 in 10 U.S. workers, resulting in nearly 14 million jobs. For example, right here in [INSERT LOCAL EXAMPLE (75-100 words) OF COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY AT WORK – A PROGRAM OR SERVICE PROVIDED WITH THE SUPPORT OF CHARITABLE GIVING. INSERT A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE PROGRAM DOES TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSFORM LIVES, WHO AND HOW MANY PEOPLE IT SERVES AND THE RESULTS IT HAS ACHIEVED.]

Fortunately, many lawmakers in Washington understand the value of philanthropy. The House Ways and Means Committee recently approved a number of measures that would protect and enhance philanthropy’s ability to serve communities throughout America. For example, one proposed bill would make the IRA charitable rollover permanent, allowing donors to give with more certainty. Another would simplify the private foundation excise tax, freeing up time and resources for foundations to spend where they are needed most.

But we’re not out of the woods yet. America’s communities are greatly concerned about other potentially harmful proposals still on the table. According to the American Enterprise Institute, a proposed 28 percent cap on the value of charitable donations could bring down giving levels by as much as $9.4 billion the first year if enacted. This translates into lost jobs, reduction of economic development, and decrease in support for the most vulnerable. Moreover, a proposal in House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp’s tax reform plan would impose a floor on the charitable deduction, denying donors the full value of their deduction. This would cause a decline in charitable giving, especially for those people making smaller donations.

And that’s not all. One proposal would impose a stringent payout requirement on donor advised funds (DAFs). DAFs are unique vehicles that allow people to “give where they live” and channel their philanthropic giving to benefit their community. We should keep the current law, which permits community foundations to hold and manage donor-advised funds that can benefit the community for years to come.

At a time of growing community needs, we must work together to strengthen and protect the philanthropic sector. Our elected officials face tough decisions about how to overcome America’s fiscal problems, but cutting off philanthropy’s lifeline to communities in need does more harm than good. These may be drastic times, but they call for thoughtful measures.

*[INSERT AUTHOR’S NAME, TITLE AND A BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTED]*