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July 25, 2018

Senator Elizabeth Warren
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren,

On behalf of Mass Audubon. I urge you to oppose any efforts to include anti-Johnson Amendment language in the Senate or conference committee versions of the Financial Services and General Government FY19 appropriations bill.

The Johnson Amendment is a longstanding protection in the federal tax code that prohibits tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofits, like Mass Audubon, from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates. Changes to the Johnson Amendment could politicize charitable nonprofits and foundations, which would directly counteract our abilities to engage in our missions and work with elected officials of all parties at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

The version of the appropriations bill passed last week by Congress includes a provision – Section 112 – undermining the Johnson Amendment by effectively blocking the IRS from enforcing it when certain violations are made. While this provision focuses on religious institutions, we are concerned it could set a precedent to encourage selective enforcement of the law.

Currently, the Senate version of the spending bill does not include the anti-Johnson Amendment language, and it's essential that it remain that way. Partisanship has no place in charitable organizations.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Karen Heymann
Legislative Director