

\_\_\_\_\_ 2019

Abigail Johnson  
Fidelity Investments  
245 Summer Street  
Boston, MA 02210

Dear Abigail Johnson,

I, the undersigned concerned citizen, am writing to voice my concern about Fidelity's Charitable Gift Fund. In recent months, it has come to light<sup>1</sup> that the Gift Fund has been used to provide financial support to groups that promote anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-LGBTQ+ views and practices.<sup>2</sup> According to Fidelity's policies, "virtually any IRS-qualified charity is eligible" to receive a donor-advised contribution.<sup>3</sup> I urge you, as CEO of Fidelity Investments, to discontinue any transmission of funds to groups whose statements or practices malign or attack entire classes of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation.<sup>4</sup>

The Gift Fund's most recent available Form 990 for the 2016–2017 tax year indicates that the Fund made grants totaling \$3.1 million to 18 organizations that groups with expertise in these fields and media outlets report have vilified and targeted classes of people.<sup>5</sup> The Alliance Defending Freedom, identified by the Human Rights Campaign as "the largest anti-LGBT legal advocacy group in the nation,"<sup>6</sup> received more than \$600,000. The David Horowitz Freedom Center, widely known as a driving force of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and anti-Black movements,<sup>7</sup> received \$834,853. The notorious white nationalist VDARE Foundation received \$17,600 from Fidelity Charitable.<sup>8</sup> The statements and actions of these organizations endanger our families and neighbors, and threaten our core democratic values.

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<sup>1</sup> "[America's Biggest Charities Are Funneling Millions to Hate Groups From Anonymous Donors](#)," ReadSludge.com, Feb. 19, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> "[America's Biggest Charities Are Funneling Millions to Hate Groups From Anonymous Donors](#)," ReadSludge.com, Feb. 19, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Fidelity Charitable, "[Charities you can support](#)."

<sup>4</sup> "[America's Biggest Charities Are Funneling Millions to Hate Groups From Anonymous Donors](#)," ReadSludge.com, Feb. 19, 2019; "[Report: Anti-Muslim groups funded by some mainstream philanthropies](#)," Roll Call, May 6, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Schedule I, 2016 Form 990, Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, Tax year July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> "[10 Shocking Facts About the Alliance Defending Freedom](#)," Human Rights Campaign, Oct. 15, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Georgetown University, "[Factsheet: David Horowitz & the Freedom Center](#)," Bridge Initiative, Sep. 12, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> "[White nationalists raise millions with tax-exempt charities](#)," Associated Press, Dec. 22, 2016.

There is an important, evolving public policy debate over strengthening legislation and regulation of donor-advised funds.<sup>9</sup> Financial services companies are developing policies to ensure that they do not transmit money to fund hateful activities.<sup>10</sup> For instance, payment processors have acted to ensure that their platforms are not used as conduits to fund “hate groups.”<sup>11</sup>

I appreciate that donor-advised funds such as the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund can support the public good; however, allowing these funds to act as conduits to support organized groups that promote bigotry does not. It is also unacceptable for Fidelity to earn money from such activities, either through management fees or investment products. Instead, policies and procedures that screen out hateful activities should become a standard part of charitable due diligence. At a time when we are experiencing growing divisions among many of our communities, we need corporations like Fidelity, that are based here in Massachusetts, to take a stand against hate and be a positive model for other businesses across the state and across the country.

I ask that Fidelity, the largest charity in the United States of America,<sup>12</sup> embrace the true definition of the word charity, which is “goodwill toward...humanity”.<sup>13</sup> I see nothing charitable in directing funds to groups whose prejudice and bigotry lead them to deny the rights and humanity of others, and I call on you to discontinue the practice of allowing Fidelity’s Gift Fund to transmit money to groups known for their hateful activities.

I respectfully request that a small delegation of the groups listed below meet with you to discuss this important issue and look forward to you reaching out to Christopher Zizzamia of Community Labor United at [christopher@massclu.org](mailto:christopher@massclu.org) to schedule that meeting.

Thank you,

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(Print and Sign)

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<sup>9</sup> The Nonprofit Quarterly, “[Do Donor-Advised Funds Require Regulatory Attention?](#)” Jul. 25, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Amalgamated Foundation, “[Hate is Not Charitable Campaign](#),” Mar. 19, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Payments Source, “[Visa, Discover, Mastercard cut ties with extremist groups after rally](#),” Aug. 16, 2017; “[Visa, PayPal and More Are Banning Hate Groups. Will It Work?](#),” Fortune, Aug. 18, 2017; “[PayPal cuts off payments to right-wing extremists](#),” CBS News, Aug. 16, 2017; Color of Change, “[Blood Money](#),” 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Philanthropy News Digest, “[Fidelity Charitable Tops List of Largest Charities in 2016](#),” Nov. 2, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Merriam Webster, “[Definition of Charity](#).”

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East Massachusetts  
ACLU of Massachusetts  
Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)  
AFSCME Council 93  
American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts  
Bargaining for the Common Good  
Boston Education Justice Alliance  
Boston Teachers Union  
City Life/Vida Urbana  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Community Labor United  
Foundation for Fair Contracting  
Greater Boston Labor Council  
GreenRoots  
Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center  
Machinists District 15  
Massachusetts AFL-CIO  
Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA)  
Massachusetts Teachers Association  
Massachusetts Voter Table  
Mass Laborers District Council  
Mass Senior Action Council  
Metro Boston Building Trades  
Muslim Justice League  
Neighbor to Neighbor  
Neighbor to Neighbor Mass Action Fund  
New England Regional Council of Carpenters  
OPEIU Local 453 at the MBTA  
Painters District Council 35  
Public Higher Education Network Of Massachusetts (PHENOM)  
Political Research Associates  
Resource Generation  
Student Immigrant Movement  
SEIU 32BJ Local 615  
SEIU Local 509