Nationally, the charitable nonprofit sector employs 10% of the U.S. workforce and partners with governments at all levels to provide essential services and promote the public good. Yet, there is no one in the federal government charged with ensuring the challenges and concerns of charitable organizations are heard or addressed. It is essential that the needs of nonprofits and their communities are considered at the beginning of public policy development, decision-making, and implementation, rather than treated as an afterthought.

The Challenge

More than 100 committees and subcommittees of Congress have some subject-matter jurisdiction over the charitable nonprofit sector, but none has primary responsibility for addressing challenges and concerns specific to frontline nonprofits, much less championing their work in communities. In the executive branch, the for-profit sector has the Commerce Department and Small Business Administration to promote business interests around the world and in communities.

The charitable sector is not seeking to establish a new bureaucracy or massive funding programs; rather the sector needs a place at the federal level that replicates what charitable nonprofits do in their communities: they collaborate with government to identify challenges, develop solutions, and partner to achieve lasting, effective impact. The Nonprofit Sector Strength and Partnership Act provides the needed structure to enhance government-nonprofit partnerships for the public good.

What the Legislation Would Do

The Nonprofit Sector Strength and Partnership Act would establish three bodies for the exchange of ideas, while also identifying several long-standing challenges in need of redress.

1. A new White House Office on Nonprofit Sector Partnership, led by an Assistant to the President, would make recommendations on federal policies to strengthen the nonprofit sector and its partnership with government.

2. Interagency Council on Nonprofit Sector Partnership, made up of leads in all federal agencies and departments, would work with charitable nonprofits for the purpose of streamlining coordination and identifying and reducing burdens on the sector.

3. Federal Advisory Board on the Nonprofit Sector, appointed by the President and Congress and made up of community-based and national nonprofit leaders, would serve as a forum for the sector to consult with policymakers.

Combined, these entities would identify challenges and make recommendations on improving federal government enforcement of nonprofit protections in the grantmaking process; promoting volunteerism and national service; improving the IRS review process for tax-exempt status; and securing parity with the for-profit sector on employment and wage data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Please cosponsor the Nonprofit Sector Strength and Partnership Act (H.R. 7587) and encourage Senators to advance companion legislation.