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Agudath
Israel
of America
אגודת ישראל באמריקה

Rabbi Abba Cohen
Vice President for Federal Government Affairs
Washington Director and Counsel

December 16, 2015

CC:PA:LPD:PR (REG-138344-13)
Room 5203
Internal Revenue Service
POB 7604, Ben Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044

Re: IRS Substantiation Requirements

Dear Sir or Madam:

Agudath Israel of America, founded in 1922, is a national Orthodox Jewish organization with affiliated chapters and congregations across country. We join the chorus of nonprofit organizations and concerned citizens that strongly oppose IRS REG-138344-13.

For donations of \$250 or more, REG-138344-13 proposes a parallel system of substantiating charitable donations to the IRS, whereby donors are asked to provide their social security number to the nonprofit organizations they are supporting. The nonprofit would then store this information and create an informational return to each such donor as well as file a copy with the IRS.

The proposed regulation would result in significant costs and burdens on nonprofit organizations and would create public confusion and disincentives for donors to support the work of charitable nonprofits, many of whom are already struggling to stay afloat while executing their public mission.

In an era of increased concern over the management of data security, this is a step in the wrong direction for nonprofits and individuals alike, and could lead fraudulent actors to target donors and reputable nonprofit organizations.

In sum, while we understand the IRS' desire to provide charitable gift substantiation alternatives, REG-138344-13 raises serious security and administrative concerns, and threatens to chill the flow of donations which are the lifeblood of any nonprofit organization, organizations which provide a kaleidoscope of good to our society. All this to amend a system which the IRS states (26 CFR Part 1), "Works effectively, with minimal burden on donors and donees, and the Treasury Department and the IRS have received few requests since the issuance of TD 8690 to implement a donee reporting system."

We, therefore, respectfully urge the IRS to retract this proposal

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Abba Cohen