

I oppose this bill because this bill goes against the First Amendment. The First Amendment reflects the foundational principles upon which the United States was established. It protects our freedom to express our beliefs, to think independently without government coercion, and to associate freely with others. These liberties are central to a free society. The government should not condition nonprofit status in a way that pressures organizations to limit or control the ideas they express. I oppose this bill because this bill tries to do exactly that. By giving the government power to impose fines and even strip away Maryland income tax, sales tax, and even property tax exemptions for our churches, parsonages, and religious schools for speaking about candidates and elections, which is our God-given liberty, the State of Maryland is attempting to silence political and religious speech. This bill would infringe upon our constitutionally protected religious and political expression. In South Korea, a pastor was imprisoned for speaking out against his political views. As a Korean-American, I've always been proud to live in the United States, a country where such things shouldn't happen. One reason I'm proud to be an American is because our constitutional system is designed to prevent government abuse of power. What we're witnessing now in South Korea is becoming akin to communist North Korea, where the people of North Korea are not even free to express their opinions. We should avoid this situation in the United States. However, this bill sets a troubling precedent, undermines the very foundations of our freedoms, and attempts to punish churches for exercising these freedoms.

Therefore, I strongly oppose this bill.