

This bill does not respect the citizens of the United States or the residents of Maryland; rather, it harms them. It seeks to take away our freedoms through control and suppression. Such actions are contrary to the long-standing traditions of America. Instead of moving our nation forward as a leading and advanced democracy, this bill risks pushing us backward. It does not promote growth or progress—it hinders it.

I strongly oppose this bill because it threatens the fundamental rights that make America the land of liberty. It goes against the spirit and protection of the First Amendment, which exists to respect and safeguard every person's God-given dignity and freedom. These are rights that must not only be preserved for us, but also passed down to our children and future generations. If this bill is enacted, it would disregard our traditions, erode what makes America truly America, and prevent the next generation from enjoying the same freedoms we have been blessed to inherit.

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 essential to a free and democratic society.

The government should not condition nonprofit status in a way that pressures organizations to limit or control the ideas they express. Yet this bill attempts to do exactly that. By granting the State of Maryland the authority to impose fines and strip away Maryland income tax, sales tax, and property tax exemptions from churches, parsonages, and religious schools for speaking about candidates and elections, the state would be penalizing what we believe to be a God-given liberty. Such action would amount to silencing political and religious speech and would infringe upon constitutionally protected religious and political expression.

In South Korea, pastors have faced imprisonment for expressing political views. As a Korean American, I have always been grateful to live in the United States—a country where such government overreach is not supposed to occur. One of the reasons I am proud to be an American is that our constitutional system is designed to prevent abuses of power. We have seen how political suppression can escalate in other nations, and we know that in North Korea, citizens are not free to express their opinions at all. The United States must not move in that direction.

This bill sets a troubling precedent. It undermines the very foundation of our constitutional freedoms and seeks to punish churches for exercising rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.