

HB0514 Written Testimony

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.

Therefore, I strongly oppose this bill.