

Dear Whom this concern,

I respectfully write to express my strong opposition to this bill, as I believe it directly conflicts with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The First Amendment embodies the fundamental principles upon which our nation was founded, safeguarding our freedoms of speech, religion, and association. These freedoms are essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society.

The government should not condition nonprofit or tax-exempt status in a manner that pressures organizations to restrict or regulate their expression. However, this bill would grant the State of Maryland the authority to impose financial penalties and revoke income, sales, and property tax exemptions from churches, parsonages, and religious schools for engaging in speech related to political candidates or elections. Such measures would effectively silence constitutionally protected political and religious expression and undermine our most cherished liberties.

As a Korean-American, I am particularly concerned by the broader implications of this bill. In South Korea, a pastor was recently imprisoned for expressing his political beliefs, demonstrating the grave consequences of government overreach into free expression. I have always taken pride in living in the United States, where our constitutional framework is designed to prevent such abuses of power. This bill establishes a troubling precedent that risks eroding the safeguards that protect our freedom of speech and religious liberty.

For these reasons, I respectfully and firmly urge you to oppose this bill. Protecting the constitutional rights of individuals and religious institutions is essential to preserving the freedoms that define our nation.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.

Sincerely,

Kristen Lee

Ellicott City, MD