

I strongly oppose this bill because it goes directly 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 freely associate with others. These liberties are essential 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. This bill attempts to do exactly that. By giving the State of Maryland the authority to impose fines and even revoke Maryland income tax, sales tax, and property tax exemptions for our churches, parsonages, and religious schools simply for speaking about candidates and elections—something we believe is a God-given liberty—the state is effectively attempting to silence political and religious speech.

This bill would infringe upon our constitutionally protected rights to religious and political expression.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose this bill.