

House Bill 0514 uses the language of “nonpartisan,” but in practice it punishes organizations for engaging in speech about political leaders. When the government threatens to revoke tax-exempt status because of speech, that is not neutrality—it is coercion.

The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion. It does not allow the government to force churches or citizens to choose between their constitutional rights and their tax status. A penalty tied to speech creates pressure to remain silent, undermining the very freedom the Constitution was designed to protect.

Nonpartisan should not mean silent. Churches have always spoken about moral issues, justice, and leadership. This includes discussing the actions of public officials and the direction of the nation. This bill blurs that line and risks suppressing legitimate and constitutionally protected speech.

History shows us why this matters. Religious leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. spoke boldly about political leaders and unjust laws. His words helped move our nation toward justice. If the government had the power to punish that kind of speech, America’s progress could have been slowed or silenced.

Finally, this bill gives government officials the power to decide when speech becomes unacceptable. That authority is dangerous because free speech should not depend on government approval. The Constitution protects speech precisely so citizens and religious leaders can speak truth without fear of punishment.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge opposition to House Bill 0514.