

Jaden Kwak

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Maryland General Assembly

Opposition Against SB 4

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jaden Kwak, and I am a resident of District 3. I write to express serious concerns about the religious liberty implications of SB 4, both as a Maryland citizen and as someone for whom church is a central and deeply valued part of life.

Church is not simply an institution to me. It is where I receive spiritual guidance, moral teaching, and counsel from pastors I trust. The relationships I have built in my church community shape how I think about faith, responsibility, and public life. When pastors speak about issues that affect our society—including leadership and civic responsibility—they are not engaging in partisan maneuvering; they are shepherding their congregations in matters of conscience. However this is not just a direct attack on me, but to my entire family and church community.

To enforce this law, state officials would have to review sermons, church communications, or ministry statements to decide whether they crossed a line. I believe this is completely wrong and is something that raises serious concerns. Even if the State does not actively monitor churches, the possibility of complaints, investigations, fines, or loss of tax protections could cause pastors to hold back from speaking clearly and boldly which is something I hold dear to..

The First Amendment protects the freedom of churches to speak about matters that affect public life. It protects not only private belief, but the ability of faith leaders to teach and guide their congregations without fear of government punishment.

As someone whose faith community plays a central role in my life, I am concerned and stand against any law that could pressure pastors to self-censor or place government officials in the position of judging religious speech.

Sincerely,

Jaden Kwak