

Paul Oh  
8401 Ivy Drive  
Maryland (Direct Resident)  
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House Economic Matters Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, Maryland 21043

HB 514 / SB 4 - **OPPOSITION** (Keeping Charities Nonpartisan Act of 2026)

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Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Oh. I live at 8401 Ivy Drive, and I am a constituent of District 9A and I am affected by HB 514 / SB 4. I respectfully submit this written testimony in opposition to the Keeping Charities Nonpartisan Act of 2026.

In my community, people look to churches and religious nonprofits for guidance on how faith connects to public life. Even when members disagree politically, sermons and ministry communications help people think through issues, evaluate leaders, and vote with an informed conscience. This bill would pressure the religious leaders we trust to stay silent about candidates and elections, and it would do so by threatening fines and loss of tax protections. That is government retaliation against core religious and political speech, and it cuts directly against the First Amendment's protections for free exercise and free expression.

HB 514 / SB 4 also imposes an unconstitutional condition by requiring charitable organizations, as part of registration, to submit a statement promising they "do not and will not" engage in prohibited candidate-related speech. The State should not demand a pledge to surrender constitutional rights as the price of operating as a church or ministry. The bill further empowers the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to investigate alleged violations and to subpoena witnesses and compel documents in the course of an investigation or hearing. When the subject is sermon content or religious teaching, that enforcement posture invites government monitoring of religious exercise and entangles the State in matters of faith in a way the Constitution is meant to prevent. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report and to vote NO on HB 514 / SB 4.

Respectfully,

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