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The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
H-107, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Cornyn  
Majority Whip  
S-208, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman  
House Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Support for a pastor's right to free speech**

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As pastors and church leaders, we write to urge your support for the right of all pastors to speak freely from their pulpits. We, the undersigned, represent many thousands of believers across the nation. We come from diverse faith backgrounds and ethnicities. We hold a variety of theological perspectives. Yet we are united by a common cause: keeping the IRS out of our sermons.

For over sixty years, Section 501c(3) of the Tax Code (the “Johnson Amendment”) has empowered federal bureaucrats to censor what a pastor preaches from the pulpit. Every election cycle, we are warned that even mentioning *biblical* issues—like the sanctity of life and marriage—could risk intrusive IRS audits, incur steep fines, and even jeopardize our churches’ tax-exempt status.

But our sermons are not ours to render to Caesar; they are ours to render to God alone. Some of us come from rich faith traditions that include applying biblical teaching to the positions of candidates. Others of us have never—and will never—mention political candidates from the pulpit. Yet we are all united in the firm belief that this is a *theological* decision to be made by the pastor and church alone—without fear of IRS retribution.

Our First Amendment freedoms are not bargaining chips to be exchanged for a tax status. Nor does silencing our voice on the important issues of our day somehow guard the purity of the church. If the “separation of church and state” has any true meaning, it is this: to keep the government from intruding into our pulpits.

It’s time for Congress to restore our right to free speech. The Free Speech Fairness Act does just that. It stops the IRS from being speech police, and allows American pastors to speak—or not speak—as their conscience requires. As congressional leaders committed to protecting the First Amendment freedoms of all Americans, we urge you pass the Free Speech Fairness Act.

Respectfully,